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Editorial.

KEENNESS.

There are many qualities which go to the making of a good nurse. Do we not all know them? Practical efficiency, tact, trustworthiness, good temper, discretion—all are admittedly indispensable. But another quality is not so often emphasised as necessary to the trained nurse, and that is keenness. Yet from the first day that a probationer enters a hospital it is both to herself and others most invaluable, for it makes all the difference between indifferent and good work, the difference between that of one who merely gives value for money paid down, and that of the artist who is never content to put less than his best into whatever he takes in hand. It is this pride of craft which carries a nurse over many hard places and wearisome days, which lightens the monotony of routine, and puts drudgery into its right place as a necessary part of the whole great scheme which is concentrated on the healing the sick. All through her training this point of view stands a nurse in good stead, and later if she decides to remain in hospital life there are many outlets for keenness. Exquisitely kept wards, and well cared for patients by no means exhaust them. As a trainer of others, nursing education, and the wider professional interests, afford scope for her energies. If she adopts private nursing as a career she will not be content merely to nurse the patient carefully and well, but will avail herself of opportunities, as they present themselves, to disseminate information on such subjects as hygiene and the laws of health. She may also be able to interest the relatives of the patient in the

present conditions of nursing and the need, in the public interest, for the authoritative definition of a minimum standard of nursing education with the subsequent registration of such nurses as have attained that standard.

In nursing amongst the poor the amount of good she can do is incalculable if once she interests herself in the general welfare of those living in the district which she serves. It is indeed this keenness for the maintenance of a high standard of health which will reveal to the district nurse the endless possibilities of her work. There may not be a large percentage of the acute cases to which she has been accustomed in hospital, and a nurse with a narrow outlook may be inclined to say that there is "nothing to do," and to complain of monotony. But if once she realises that her work has not changed in interest but in character, that its ultimate object is the maintenance of a high standard of health amongst the people, and that prevention as well as cure should form part of her daily routine, she will not have to complain of lack of employment. The daily inculcation of the laws of health may not be as exciting as a big operation, yet, what could be better work for the community than to prevent the infantile ophthalmia which is responsible for so large a percentage of blindness in adults, or to save members of a phthisical family from infection by one stricken with the disease, by teaching the precautions necessary to be observed in such cases. Such instances might be multiplied indefinitely. Let us only once realise that our whole duty to the community and to our profession, is not comprised in the care of individual patients and there is no limit to the interest or usefulness of our work.

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