

hospitals, and it was possible not so very long ago for nurses to enter for a course of training which only lasted one month. There is fortunately at present a tendency for teaching institutions to raise a minimum period for which a nurse may enter to at least three months, and there is no doubt that this is really too short. Given a reasonably intelligent pupil, the five months' course of training as given at Queen Charlotte's Hospital seems to me fairly adequate.

It is clear that the would-be maternity nurse has much to occupy her mind during this period of training. If she has had no previous experience of dealing with sick people, she has first and foremost to learn, as completely as is practicable in the time, the elements of nursing, so that she may be able to do all that is requisite for the mother, at any rate, when the puerperal period is uncomplicated.

She has also to study the art of handling the baby and to make herself acquainted with the habits and peculiarities of very young infants. Further, it is essential that a maternity nurse should possess a good working knowledge of the course of normal labour, and of the accidents that may happen both before and after it. A nurse may at any time find herself face to face with some serious complication; in the absence of the doctor she ought not only to be able to recognise it, but she may also be called on to cope with it until further assistance can be obtained. This role she may not often be called upon to play, but a knowledge of how to deal, even temporarily, with emergencies can be obtained by a study of the elements of midwifery. Panic, which so often seizes on a nurse at such moments as these, is largely the result of ignorance, and the more thoroughly she has studied the subject, the less likely is she to be frightened, in the time of danger. It is for this reason that I strongly advise that those who are going to take up maternity nursing, should spend a certain portion of their time in the actual study of midwifery. If this is not done during the period of pupilage the opportunity for doing it may never occur.

And finally she has to learn to be clean; not merely the theory of cleanliness, but its practice. It is only by a careful system of drill that she will be able to carry out in the private house the system of cleanliness which she has learnt in the hospital. Such an opportunity is afforded to her by her work on the district.

A lying-in hospital is not merely an institution for teaching, but it affords the intelligent pupil an opportunity to learn, an opportunity such as she may never have again.

In these modern days there has, I think, been a tendency to exaggerate the importance of the teacher. I say this with some hesitancy, because there is a very formidable body of men and women belonging to this profession, and both they and the general public talk and write much about the science and art of teaching.

But if each of us look back on our own career, whilst I am sure we are all ready to admit how much we have gained from some of those who have taught us, yet there were some things which we learnt for ourselves, and the very fact of finding them out for ourselves was of inestimable value. The modern teacher is too apt to think that the pupil cannot acquire anything unless it is stuffed into him or her, as the case may be, and thus the pupils of the present day run the risk of being overtaught. They become mere passive receptacles into which vast masses of information are poured in a very short time. They are given no time for thought and observation and no time for digestion. Books are studied in the same spirit and facts and statements are memorised from books, whilst the actual things thus described are going on before their eyes, unnoticed.

I do not wish to disparage the teacher or the teaching art; it is an art given to few. The teacher has many most useful functions to perform. First and foremost he should be able to excite enthusiasm in those who come to learn. He can do much by preventing the pupil from confusing that which is rare with that which is common. That which is rare and unusual seems to have a fatal fascination for the pupil and is eagerly retained by the memory at the expense of the common things of every-day life.

The constant repetition of common rudimentary facts and principles is one of the great duties of the teacher. The necessity for this repetition soon becomes painfully obvious to those who both teach and examine. The teacher should also try and inculcate in the pupil as far as possible clearness and correctness of thought and language. How often do you hear pupils who are asked a question say: "I know the answer quite well, but I cannot express it"? The pupil who says that is labouring under a misapprehension. I think it may be fairly asserted that no one understands a thing properly until he or she can explain it to someone else. In the training of maternity nurses constant efforts should be made to see that, as far as possible, what is learnt is clearly apprehended, and that they are not merely taught how to do certain things, but also why they do them. A

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