

duty are points which I have laid stress upon in the earlier portion of this lecture.

You must, further, as Miss Nightingale says, "be an example of neatness, order, cleanliness, and sobriety. You must be most careful to discourage any tale-bearing, scandal, or other unprofitable conversation, and you must not interfere with any patient's religious opinions."

You see what a deal is required of a Nurse. She must be physically healthy, and mentally intelligent, and she must be observant, obedient and truthful, and learn, intelligently, all that she can. In one word, she must be *thorough*.

There are few more honourable or more suitable occupations for many women than that of Nursing. I think there can be no doubt about that; and there is plenty of work, well remunerated, for as many as like to take it up. The difficulty is, not to find employment for well-Trained Nurses, but to find the women suitable for the work.

I have, perhaps, placed before you a rather high standard of excellence; but do not let this discourage you; rather let it spur you on to use every effort to become as perfect as you can in the work you have chosen. Besides the satisfaction which all must feel in the mere act of doing good, knowledge is power, you know; and looked at from a mere mercenary point of view, the occupation of Nursing is one which, the more perfect you are in it, the more likely is it to place you in positions of honour, of trust, and of competence.

Having thus sketched out for you the qualifications for success as a Nurse, it may be of some service if I make a few remarks on some objectionable specimens of the genus Nurse, and for some of these I am mainly indebted to a paper by the late Dr. Habershon, published in the *British Medical Journal* a few years ago.\*

A well-trained and efficient Nurse is one of the most valuable assistants a Doctor can have; but a conceited and ignorant Nurse can do nothing but thwart him.

First, then, let us recognise a *conceited Nurse*. "She appears most attentive and conciliatory, but quickly shows that she is quite satisfied with her own attainments; she was trained at such an Institution, and received a certificate; and such an Institution, and received a certificate; she has seen similar cases, 'and brought them through;' the Doctor is all very well, he may give his directions, but as soon as his back is turned, his orders go with him, and are set at naught, or laughed at; 'Oh, that may be all very well, but I know what will be best;' and so the Nurse follows out the directions only as she chooses."

\* Vol. 2, 1880, page 118.

"Some Nurses are, however, most *pretentious*. On a certain occasion a Nurse arrived with two stethoscopes, two thermometers, and a case of instruments—pretty well for a beginning. The Surgeon said to his colleague he thought their attendance was not needed."

"Worse still is the *meddlesome and officious* Nurse. The Doctor may give his directions, but he cannot enter into every negation" (*i.e.*, he can't tell you everything you are *not* to do.) "The Doctor may order—as in the case of acute intestinal disease—that the patient is to remain perfectly quiet. Instructions have been given to the Nurse, in her official training, that the back is to be washed and dusted; and so the patient is pulled about, raised, and his back washed; and if it is objected that the Doctor has been disobeyed, it is at once stated, 'You did not say he was *not* to be so treated.'"

"A *lethargic Nurse* is equally to be deprecated where constant watching is required." Food has to be administered at frequent intervals, but the patient remains quiet, or does not ask for it, and it is not given; or it is put by his bed-side, and he takes it or not, as he chooses.

An *intemperate* Nurse I need not dwell on; she should be at once dismissed as soon as she is found out.

"It is also bad to have an *unsympathising* and *heartless* Nurse, one who takes no heed to the little wants of the patient, but who is put out by the irritability of the sufferer, or by the restlessness consequent on weakness."

There are one or two types which Dr. Habershon has omitted. There is the *lazy* Nurse; and there is the Nurse who, if she does not say so, is always thinking "this or that is not *my* duty." "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to, do do it with all thy might"; never mind what it is, so long as you can do it.

A Nurse who does not pay proper attention to the directions given to her, and when found fault with says, "I thought so and so," is also an objectionable type of Nurse.

"But whilst these are some of the characters of Nurses familiar to every Doctor, they are but isolated instances, often bringing out in brighter relief the zealous care and untiring devotion of those who have sympathy combined with skill."

"There is a great difference between the training of women and the training of Nurses. Unless a woman have a good character, and be sober and cleanly in her habits, neat in her person, orderly in her ways, able to restrain herself, and to use tact and kindness, and especially sympathy and gentleness, no amount of Nurse training will be of any avail."

"It is important to prevent bed sores, and this

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)