

to do, and left. Another, not a probationer, when asked to fan a patient who was ill, was said to remark that she was not a "punkah-coolie." All this, of course, only goes to show the great difference in the conception of the work out here, and many of the would-be nurses wish to adopt the rôle of "Ministering Angel" before they have mastered the very first elements of nursing.

Another reason is that so many girls out here adopt the profession of teaching. It is from this calling, I think, that the greater number of our candidates are drawn. This work, although arduous, is not so hard as nursing, nor are the hours so long. Saturdays and Sundays being free, the girls have more time to themselves, and they are under less strict supervision.

Then, again, the term of training for the nursing profession is regarded as long. Girls out here think three or four years a perfect lifetime, and in a land where lack of concentration of purpose seems to be a great fault, they will not settle down for that time; they will not bind themselves. In a teacher's post they do not sign for nearly so long, and they can leave with very little notice, instead of having to pay a fine of, say, rupees 150.

On talking to one of my staff who has lived in India all her life, on the paucity of European candidates, she said she thought it might be due to the fact of Lord Curzon's having laid so much stress on covenanted and uncovenanted service, and that because of this the better class of girls were trying to get to England to train, in order to take a better position afterwards. This, I must confess, rather surprised me, as the idea of Lord Curzon's having influenced those who might otherwise have applied for training here, had not occurred to me.

Another reason, given by a clergyman, is that out here many people regard an hospital with feelings of repugnance. They do not like their daughters having anything to do with one, forgetting that if we all gave in to our feelings in this way, there would be no one left to care for the sick and wounded.

Other reasons are that the European country-bred girl is not very strong physically; she feels the work too heavy and the strain too great. She does not have the physical stamina of the girls at home. In many cases their upbringing is to blame for this.

Seeing, then, that those conditions exist, and that we cannot improve the rearing of the girls, however we would like to do so, it is our duty to see what can be done in the way of overcoming this state of affairs.

I think that we ought to try and render the nursing profession more attractive. One way in which we can do this is by being exceedingly careful whom we take as nurses.

Women, as far as possible, who will "adorn the profession," so to speak, and not those who bring it into disrepute. This is difficult at first, because of the paucity of suitable applicants, but in the end it pays, as in time it becomes known, I find, what class of women one takes into their hospital, and only the better class apply.

Besides raising the tone of our nurses we should raise the standard of education and training. I think there should be a preliminary examination in general knowledge for the candidates, a definite curriculum of nursing, with stated lectures and examinations, and certificates to be given after three or four years *only*. I find that in many cases nurses do not value their training enough, and that during their period of training, if anything annoys them, or if they wish to marry, even when the marriage does not appear to be a very suitable one, they will throw up their work and break their agreements, paying our fine of rupees 150.

Uniform pay. This is most essential, as some of our hospitals have no idea of this, and unnecessary friction between the heads of the different hospitals is thereby caused.

There certainly should be pensions. This last we have at St. George's Hospital, Bombay. A nurse gives all her time and life to the work; in many instances she receives a salary which is very inadequate, and she often has to help her people, who may have assisted her when she was in training and only earning a nominal salary. How many anxious hours would be avoided if a nurse knew that, when old and unable to work, Government would provide for her! Even in India all women cannot marry, and it is a difficult problem for many, this old age. A pension would also be an inducement to a nurse to work well, as only those who deserved it would draw the pension.

In every well organised training school there should be a nurses' club, where they can have games, such as badminton and tennis, etc., and with up-to-date magazines and library. The nurses could, when off duty, have their friends to tea here, and enjoy themselves. All this tends to the promoting of good fellowship, and many a lonely girl who comes hundreds of miles to train, and who knows no one in the station, is helped along. Then, I do not think that nurses should be allowed to train in midwifery before having general training. This would prevent those who go out as monthly nurses without having general training, posing as trained nurses.

An important point is that we should endeavour to get our certificates more recognised in England. In connection with nursing in India, I should like to call the attention of those here to the fact that certificates given in India do not seem to count for much in England. I ask *why* this should be? It is most discouraging. Many of my nurses have gone to England for midwifery, and they nearly all have the same story to tell—trained in India, not eligible for *good* appointments in England; and yet, on occasions when they *are* employed, they generally give satisfaction. Of one of our nurses, who nursed for Sir F. Treves, in London, he said that he could trust her in any emergency, he was so pleased with her work. While Indian trained nurses are admitted into the "Lady Minto Nursing Association," there is difficulty about their getting posts in the "Queen Alexandra's Indian Nursing Service." I have asked our Honorary Secretary to find out why this last is so. While I

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)