

every one is heartily glad when she takes her departure. The antipathy to a trained nurse is innate. It is in part a relic of the time when nurses were very different from what they are now, but chiefly it is the expression of that natural but mistaken affection which makes every mother and wife believe that she is better able to nurse her child or her husband than anyone else. She argues that she knows their ways better and that she loves them better, arguments which are against rather than in favour of her conclusion that she wants no nurse, for they prove that she ought to delegate these duties to others who have a less vital interest in their proper performance. In many cases when a good nurse has been secured the relief of her presence is felt throughout the house, and in any subsequent illness the suggestion of a nurse is eagerly welcomed. This is as it should be, but it is not always the case.

I know of houses which have been visited with much sickness where the suggestion of a nurse is met with the remark: "We should be so glad if you could manage with one nurse," or "Do you really know the nurse who is coming, because we have had such dreadful experiences with them."

Now this ought not to be, because a wider experience of individual nurses should increase rather than quench the desire to have their services when the need for them arises. If it does not, there is some fault either in the women who take up private nursing or in the system which trains them—or, rather, which sends them untrained into the sick room. In most cases the fault does not lie with the women, for they have passed through their hospital course most creditably, and they are very anxious to do their best, if it is only because their livelihood depends upon it. It must, therefore, be the fault of a system which assumes that every certificated nurse is fitted to become a private nurse without further training. In the medical profession no one assumes that a man is fitted to undertake private practice as soon as he becomes qualified. It is usual for him to go as an assistant or as a junior partner, that he may be initiated into the work he is undertaking. He then learns what is expected of him, and he is taught the ethics of his profession; of both these he is usually completely ignorant at the end of his hospital career. Something of the same system might be followed in nursing. A nurse who has just received her certificate might go as an assistant nurse, and, for a time, at a reduced fee, never working by herself but always with someone who has been promoted, not necessarily by examination, from

a junior to a senior grade. Such a period of probation need not be a long one, as a few months would be sufficient, but I am convinced that it would be advantageous to the whole profession of nursing.

It is no part of my duty to point out the qualities which are necessary or desirable in a nurse. They must be well known to everyone; still I hate to hear from a patient that "Nurse So and So is as gruff as a bear this morning," or, when I go downstairs, that "she is so domineering that the servants are giving notice," or that "she is so noisy and careless that she really must go, and you must find me someone else." Some nurses arouse opposition by standing upon their dignity in matters which seem to me to be of the least possible importance. They have never learnt the first great point in the treatment of the sick, self-effacement—a virtue which need not be carried to the extent of servility. It is quite unnecessary, for instance, in a lower middle-class home to ring for the only servant every time the fire wants mending, nor is it desirable in a cottage for the nurse to insist upon her bed being made by the daughter of the house. There is no loss of dignity in doing things for yourself, and when I hear of this kind of trouble it makes me think that the nurse is not a lady either by birth or education, and that she is wholly unsuited for private nursing. Ladies and really first-class nurses have no such ideas, for they adapt themselves exquisitely to their surroundings, and fall in with everything, so long as it is not dishonest.

(To be concluded.)

#### LEAGUE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL NURSES.

A general meeting of the League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses was held at the Hospital last Saturday. The President, Miss Cox Davies presided, and the Hon. President, Miss Isla Stewart, occupied a seat on the platform. Mrs. Walter Spencer was unanimously elected Vice-President of the League. In proposing her election, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick said that Mrs. Spencer was well known to all the members. Throughout her married life she had held the profession to which she belonged in honour and esteem.

Sister Surgery, who seconded the resolution, referred to the hard work done by Mrs. Spencer as Hon. Secretary, during the first three years.

At the close of the meeting, the members adjourned to the Staff Nurses' Sitting Room, from which issued the cheerful tinkling of tea cups, and soon it was alive with the hum of eager conversation.

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