

selves. We wish these ideals to extend throughout the world and, where it is possible, to have them improved upon. For this reason he desires to see the private nursing staff recruited from the best educated candidates and from the higher rather than from the lower social grades. He concluded his paper with an exhortation to the nurse to avoid the ever-present temptation of becoming so absorbed in nursing as to have no interests outside it. A private nurse should remember that her patient is not always acutely ill, and that an educated convalescent required the nurse to be conversant with the topics of the day, and capable of discussing them from a reasonable standpoint.

THE PATIENT'S VIEW.

MME. ALPHEE SALVADOR said: It is the glory of England that she was foremost in the reform of hospital nursing, in which the whole world is now deeply interested. The qualities of the nurse are complex; obedience to the mandates of the physicians is only one part. The characteristics which make the nurse acceptable to the patient arise from her intuition; she needs true psychological science; by a sort of guesswork she must be capable of rapidly entering into communion with the ambient atmosphere in which she finds herself. The nurse must have gifts of the heart—the gift of love and the intellectual must come to the aid of the moral and educational qualities.

THE NURSE'S VIEW.

MISS BEATRICE KENT said: From the professional point of view, it should be understood that the private nurse must be fully trained, not only in the ordinary branches but in all. At present her training does not include many important special lines, so that in order to fit herself for these she is obliged to take extra courses. Her preparation should be even higher and more advanced than that of the hospital nurse, for she needs to be skilled on the ethical and psychological sides of nursing. The absence of supervision, the non-officialism of private duty, the great responsibility thrown on the private nurse, demand a different set of qualities—ready judgment, initiative, resourcefulness.

The most serious trial of the private nurse, leading occasionally to the use of drugs, or even to suicide, is the difficulty of obtaining sufficient sleep.

From the economic aspect, the case for the private nurse is a bad one. No payment for work can be considered adequate if it does not permit of laying by for a rainy day, and the nurse is often badly sweated, and is exposed to the competition of untrained women. Also, while they sometimes have had debts, they have no Defence Union, like the medical men. The co-operative system, when justly managed, is the best system for the private nurse. Further remedies for economic disabilities would be: organisation and control of the profession by a State-appointed authority and a Nurses' Defence Union.

On the ethical side is the ever-present need of retaining one's ideal, which supports one in the daily round of duty, self-cultivation, reading, com-

munion with the great minds and thoughts will keep nurses from falling into materialism.

DISCUSSION.

MISS ISLA STEWART: I want to correct Miss Kent in one particular. She spoke of all hospitals as not employing nurses on the co-operative system. In St. Bartholomew's our nurses are on the co-operative system after the fourth year. After that fourth year those who go into the private nursing home are on the co-operative system—that is to say, they take all the money they earn less 7½ per cent., and for that 7½ per cent. we give them a box-room for their belongings when they have cases outside, and we also forward on all letters and look after them in every way possible.

MISS LANSCHOT-HUBBRECHT then made a few remarks on the paper which had been read.

MIDDLE. CHAPTAL: I only want to say a few words about the necessity of the ethical training of the nurse. I think that is the first thing for the private nurse to learn thoroughly and well. She must have not only ethical lessons, and teaching in the ethics of nursing, but must be able and capable of thinking enough about the subject.

Mrs. BEDFORD FENWICK claimed for private nursing that it is one of the highest branches of nursing. It is not so at present, and the reason why to a very large extent is because, with the exception of very limited cases private nursing is very badly paid. A large number of women who have private nursing have never had a chance to show what they are made of. They work under the supervision sometimes of trained people, sometimes of untrained people and always—or nearly always they are considered as nursing material and as a commercial commodity. I do not say that it does not suit some women to be placed in that position, because what I feel is this, that if they resented that position they would not do it. But, on the other hand, we have to recognise there is no general standard for education of nurses in this country, and nurses are recruited from all classes without an efficient education, and are not always able to take the position they ought with regard to private practice. To be a private nurse you have to be an exceedingly clever woman; you want to be a very clever woman; you want to be able to go into a house or houses in every sort of position, different temperaments to deal with, all sorts of different classes of people, and you must be the master mind—you have to manage everyone. Some people call that tact; I call it the highest form of intelligence, and, moreover than that, it shows a very wide and sympathetic nature. No person manages human beings well who does not love them, understand them, and sympathise with them, and so it comes to this, nurses, that we have got to educate the hospital authorities, our teachers, and the public generally to look upon the private nurse as something quite different to what they have looked upon her in the past. Well, then, I think when they realise what a valuable asset they have in a really qualified, well-educated, sympathetic nurse, they will not grudge her proper remuneration, because you know human nature is very human, and the truth of the matter is that if a

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)