

# THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED  
THE NURSING RECORD

EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,194.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1911.

XLVI.

## Editorial.

### THE JOY OF LIFE.

One of the charms of a nurse's profession is that she sees life as it really is, and learns to know humanity stripped of its artificiality—its sincerity and its weakness—its beauty and its sordidness—its heroism and its viciousness—its unselfishness and its incredible meanness. Of all its harmonies and discords the one which probably makes the deepest and most abiding impression on nurses whose work takes them both to the gates of life and the gates of death, is the note of deep underlying sadness, ever to be heard by those who penetrate beneath the presentment of things as they seem, to the reality of things as they are. Pain precedes the advent of the child into the world, pain, with few exceptions, is the precursor of the reaper who points insistently down the difficult way to "death the gate of life," and though the space between is chequered with sunshine and shadow, light and darkness, the nurse knows—none better—given she has a sympathetic nature, that she will not be long with a patient before she hears of his troubles, and that often before the healing of the body is accomplished the mind diseased must be wisely and sympathetically dealt with.

Therefore a quality which nurses should endeavour to cultivate is joyousness. There is trouble enough in the world; no one, more especially a sick person, wishes to see long faces. How should a nurse, herself depressed and miserable, bring consolation to those who need it? Do we not all know the depressing influence of a person who always takes a gloomy view of things, and how hard it is to prevent oneself from becoming infected with the same views? We know little about the mind, but

perhaps when scientists have learnt more, we shall discover that it too has its benevolent and malevolent microbes, warring for the mastery. If so, surely some of the most evil must be those which poison joy at its spring, insidiously instilling ideas of impending evil when no trouble threatens, that the worst is sure to happen, when in reality the outlook is fair enough, were it not stained with sombre hues by the imagination of the sufferer whose mind needs invigoration.

Therefore, let nurses make a point of cultivating the microbe of joy, studying and presenting the joyful side of life—not its artificialities and garishness, but the pleasures to be found in simple things, in form and colour, in music and painting, in architecture and in nature, and last, but not least, in the world of books. Let them cultivate these pleasures with a view to diverting the attention of their patients from their troubles, to the delights which are theirs if only they will enter into and possess their kingdom. And if nurses think their means are small, and that they cannot afford to spend much on personal pleasures, this very fact may be helpful to them. For the majority of people ways and means must always be a consideration, and the amount spent on personal pleasure limited. But the beauties and the wonders of Nature are free to all. In large towns and cities the beautiful music in the churches and parks, and the fine pictures in public galleries are accessible for a nominal amount, and the lover of books can revel in the best, at will, in the free libraries. What reason then for sadness when

"God's in his Heaven  
All's right with the world"?

But let us see to it that our own contribution to the world we live in is joy, not sadness.

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