

opportunity for privacy, the street or yard their playground, wee things of six or seven years of age having to look after babies and do the work of the house, while the mothers are trying to earn money for food.

What can a nurse do? First she must be just, never make a promise she is unable to fulfil. If she cannot do what the child asks then she must explain the reason she cannot; never threaten to punish a child or do anything to frighten him (he has probably had too much of that treatment). He must be taught right from wrong. If you give them a word of encouragement the majority of children will try to do right to please you. Always bear in mind what a little they have been taught, and make the most of their efforts to improve, and ignore as many of their faults as you can. By this means you will sow the seeds of self-respect and give them confidence in themselves. You will be surprised at how much they will help you, by then telling newcomers the little things "Nurse" likes to have done, or left undone. Of all things teach them modesty and decency. In your hurry to wash them, or to do a dressing, never leave them exposed. They can be washed under blankets as easily as adults, and screens are provided for other purposes.

To many nurses the excitement of a ward, the scientific side of hospital life are so engrossing that they are apt occasionally to let the human side of their work take a second place. A woman who does this, will never make a *true nurse*; she must be on her guard always to see that her sympathy and intelligence are equally balanced; she must be prepared for self-sacrifice, and must be possessed of tact, patience, and perseverance. Work with children is endless; they require you to be keenly on the alert night and day; therefore good health is most essential in a nurse. When seriously ill, the condition of children varies very quickly, and they have not the knowledge to explain what is amiss with them as an older patient would do. It is useless to tell them to do, or not to do, certain things; you have to see to that yourself. If nurses could only teach the patients how to keep their health, what a noble work they would accomplish.

Suggestions on the most nourishing, and at the same time most economical foods, the value of neat and serviceable clothing, in the place of tawdry finery, that would not cost more than they already spend, the value of fresh air, and other of Nature's many remedies, are all useful. Music, flowers, and an interest in nature and animals are things that are much

appreciated by children; also games that develop their muscles, and require self-control. When convalescing after illness, a great help in restoring health in children is to find intelligent occupation for their minds as well as their bodies, for a healthy mind makes a healthy body.

Nursing is a noble work, but it carries with it very great responsibilities, and women must not take it up thoughtlessly, or think it is an easy life, for without doubt it is a hard and lonely one, and requires the highest type of womanhood, *not* life's failures. Before long, I hope we shall find the nursing profession will be better organised in every way. Better teachers, and a more comprehensive training. General hospitals now only give nurses experience in medical and surgical work, during their three years' training, as all special diseases have hospitals set aside for their treatment. It is an age of specialisation. A nurse has now much to learn after she has finished her general training, before she is qualified to take up any of the new branches of work or to undertake private nursing. When the Bill before Parliament for the Registration of Nurses is passed, training schools will improve and facilities will be arranged for the study of things it is necessary for a nurse to know.

I should like, lastly, to suggest to girls who think of taking up nursing work to study carefully "A History of Nursing," by Miss Nutting and Miss Dock. They will realise then how much progress has been made in the last 30 years, and how much we owe to our pioneers, Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale, Isla Stewart, and many other women of firm purpose and undaunted courage. Their work and names will live for ever. Do not be discouraged by present difficulties. "What has been done *can* be done." We have many equally noble women still with us, who are devoting their lives to this good work. We can all help a little. Never think a thing is useless, because it is only a small thing you are able to accomplish. Keep on sowing seeds, one will take root when you least expect it. I have some bulbs which the gardener pronounces useless, but I shall be disappointed if I do not find at least one pure flower in the spring.

JULIA HURLSTON.

A portrait of Miss S. A. Swift, late Matron of Guy's Hospital, by Mr. Draper, has been presented to the Hospital and hangs in the Nurses' Home.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)