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EDITORIAL.

SELF-RELIANCE.

"It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

There is something in average human nature which makes it unwilling to dissent from the crowd. It is so easy to acquiesce, to take the line of least resistance. Surely the opinion held by everyone must be right. To set oneself in opposition would indicate conceit and want of wisdom. Thus people are apt to argue when conscience urges an unpopular line of conduct. And yet, of what value is the opinion of the multitude? Watch it, and you will find it a reed, shaken with the wind. Swaying this way to-day; that to-morrow, influenced perchance by expediency, chicanery, speciousness, by many things which will not stand the test when brought to the bar of conscience.

Emerson says:—"It is only as a man puts off all foreign support and stands alone that I see him to be strong and to prevail. He is weaker by every recruit to his banner. Is not a man better than a town? Ask nothing of men, and in the endless mutation, thou only firm column must presently appear the upholder of all that surrounds thee."

Many, perhaps most, new probationers, begin their life as nurses with high ideals. Well is it for them if they cherish them and keep them unimpaired throughout their hospital career. For a hospital is a world in miniature, the opinion of one's seniors counts for much. It may be that the probationer is thrown with those whose example is a stimulus to her, who will help her to fulfil her aspirations, and inspire her with ideals formerly undreamt of. It may be, on the other hand,

that her lot is cast with those whose opinions are unworthy, whose influence is not on the side of what she has learnt to believe right. Then comes the trial time, for there is no greater test of character than to run counter to the opinion of one's world. Happy the nurse who, while refraining from condemning others, maintains her own integrity, and claims the right to independence of thought, with perfect firmness and sweetness.

Throughout her professional career a nurse will find many occasions on which it is necessary for her to exercise an independent judgment. Once the habit is formed, however, it becomes second nature as time goes on, and when the first difficult steps have been taken the rest is comparatively easy. As time goes on she will gain the trust of her superiors, the respect of her equals and subordinates, and the confidence of her patients, as well as the approval of her own conscience, for such a nurse may be relied upon faithfully to carry out, to the letter, medical directions in regard to the treatment of the sick, to be loyal to those in authority, and to devote herself to the interest of her patients. Uprightness and moral rectitude in personal conduct cannot fail to have a reflex influence on her work, and mean subterfuges and derelictions of duty are abhorrent to her. She does her daily tasks well, not because she fears blame or discovery if she shirks, but because she scorns to give anything less than the best that is in her. In the right performance of a duty she has found the environment in which her character can develop and grow strong, and is a better and nobler woman at the close than at the beginning of her professional career. As Robert Louis Stevenson has said:—"To know what you prefer instead of humbly saying Amen to what the world tells you you ought to prefer, is to have kept your soul alive."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)