

If, then, it be manifest that we must needs have a division of labour in our ranks—which seems to me highly desirable—the preparatory arrangements should be made in a practical, methodical, and scientific way. Practically, and by way of elucidation, we might advantageously begin by drafting the Nursing profession into four great and leading departments—viz., Obstetric Nursing, District Nursing, Private Nursing, and Hospital Nursing. The present crowded state of many of our “general” Nursing Institutions is simply appalling; and vegetation is a thing entirely out of the question. And that this wretched state of things still continues to exist is, it seems to me, a standing reproach to our profession. Were we as energetic, as progressive, and as persevering a body of workers as we might become, this sort of work would soon be put out of existence altogether. Think for a moment how absolutely different in character each of the four branches of Nursing aforesaid are, and you will, I feel sure, agree with me that it is nothing more nor less than a manifest act of injustice to our noble army of Nurses that they should have been for so long a time simply *choked* for want of “growing” space.

For, at the close of many years of arduous toil in every department of Nursing alternately, I would herewith record my conviction that no Nurse can become an expert in more than one of the four departments aforesaid. Should you doubt the truth of this logical conclusion, a fair and impartial trial would doubtless convince you likewise. And the common practice of sending out Nurses into each department indiscriminately cannot be too severely censured; and failure in all such cases is inevitable. Our Probationer-Nurses, I would add, must have more kindness and consideration than this if we are to develop their best attributes. To borrow a sentence from my letter in your issue of January 30th last, “We want good Hospital Nurses, we want good Private Nurses, we want *thoroughly* experienced District Nurses, and we want capable Midwives.” I repeat, some such a division of labour as this is imperative if we are to hold our own in the race. We must have a better education “all round” if we are to keep pace with the times.

“We are continually talking,” observes Hammersley, “of our inferiority to France and Germany in designs. In these countries *every* man has received an education in art, from the designer to the lowest class of workmen, to enable him thoroughly to understand and to love the work to be done. In Lyons I have seen workmen bring into their shops quantities of flowers and draw them merely for their beauty, not because they were obliged to do so. These are the men to make work beautiful, and to do justice to the designer. But even supposing the designer and the workman to be well educated, it is no less important that the user of a thing should be able to appreciate it too. ‘People in this country,’ say manufacturers, ‘are not in a position to tell good things from bad ones.’ I have no belief in the statement that the people are not prepared for beautiful things in art. That they want education in art I readily admit, but that they have an instinctive love for it I fully believe.”

Into whatever groove the proposed “evolution” of Nursing might ultimately, if not sooner, drift, there can be no two opinions as to the commanding importance of a *thoroughly* comprehensive and all-round base training. Hereafter each individual Nurse or Nurse-elect might advantageously take sides; resolved, in beginning to build thereon, to know all about her own particular department of Nursing that can be known. For, be it remembered, occasions of learning and self-improvement come to all of us, stay with us for a time, then pass. May I ask every Probationer-Nurse to kindly bear this in mind? as time will never bring you back opportunities mis-improved. Look not with longing eyes at the things beyond your reach; but hasten to lay hold of the “golden” and fleeting opportunities around you, and make the most and best possible use of them. Oh, say not that you

have “no time” for self-improvement! Are there not twenty-four precious hours deposited daily on your behalf?

And should we not countersign this bit of counsel on behalf of our matrons and committees? those of them who have been known to be what they call at St. Stephen’s “blockers.” Upon all such I would emphatically urge the necessity to “advance” or “retreat”; in other words, to please do not continually block the wicket gate to the highway of progress. Applaud when we run, console us when we fall, cheer us when we recover, but pray let us pass on, for our work’s sake let us pass on. Integrity is twin sister to truthfulness. And I would venture to express a hope that the time is within measurable distance when our Matrons will see the wisdom of sometimes forgetting the word “mistress,” having unconsciously exchanged it for the words “associate” and “companion”; and I long also to see the words MOTHER, COUNSELLOR and FRIEND introduced as the need ariseth. We were all Probationers once upon a time; and our Probationers, do they not want “mothering”? Merit is always modest. Then our committees, are they all sinless in this matter? I trow not. So it comes to pass that many of our most worthy and progressive Matrons oftentimes find their hands securely tied and bound by those terrible meshes of red tape. And may I ask every “grumbling” Nurse to kindly keep this fact in mind? For

“How’er it be, it seems to me,  
Tis only noble to be good;  
Kind hearts are more than coronets,  
And simple faith than Norman blood.”

Again, technical education should, I think, combined with self-help and an indomitable perseverance, enable the would-be *successful* Nurse to graduate wisely her own course of training into three grades—viz., the preparatory, or domestic grade; the finishing, or Hospital grade; the supplementary, or knowledge of human nature grade. But tact is useless without integrity. There must be no superficial work if she would excel; all she does must be done conscientiously; she must plumb the bottom, not skim the surface. To make a thoroughly intelligent Nurse of herself the Nurse-elect must know somewhat of human nature, be *thoroughly* domesticated, know the “why” and “wherefore” of the various processes through which the material upon which she is destined to operate passes; and it is this additional knowledge, preparatory and supplementary, added to a comprehensive Hospital training, that comprises the professional Nurse’s course of technical education. For my own part, Sir, I hope to remain “a learner” to the end of my life. And although I should be the last person in the world to say a word against our Hospitals, yet I will say plainly that no Hospital training in itself can make a thoroughly acceptable Private or District Nurse of the Probationer. There then is the rub, the grand “secret” of many of the so-called failures of the past, a wrinkle which I would recommend to the thoughtful consideration of the B.N.A.

Thus it comes to pass that in the efficient discharge of a programme like this the Nurse-elect can acquire for herself, with an earnest will, the greater part of this additional knowledge far better and more thoroughly than it could be done by any outside agency. What she most needs is an earnest resolution to climb, even if sometimes she must perforce go on her hands and knees to it, assured that as she scales the higher levels she will leave the “fogs” below. “Faint heart never won fair lady”; and he never will. Then let her press on undaunted; and nowise be content any longer to let other arts have the advantage of technical education from the commencement of their work, while we poor Nurses go floundering on entirely without it. “The way to progress is step by step.”

Once more. Look at the world-famed Mendelssohn, Handel, and Beethoven, for instance. Have these men, any of them, composed their great oratorios and sonatas just as their inspiration prompted them, without first having studied

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