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EDITORIAL.

RECREATION.

One of the last things that a nurse thinks of who is keen about her work is recreation; so long as her patients need her, she finds both her pleasure and her duty in doing her utmost for them, and it is unquestionably true many a life has been saved because a nurse, regardless of her own physical and mental needs, has, with absolute singleness of purpose, and with a devotion which commands our admiration, spared herself neither night nor day until the patient is on the high road to convalescence.

Nevertheless, the occasions when one is justified in imperilling one's own health to save that of another are comparatively rare, for if the patient is so acutely ill that he needs constant attention day and night, additional help, if asked for, can usually be obtained, and it is obviously far better for the patient that his nurse, whether by day or by night, should be fresh and alert rather than dull and lethargic from want of proper sleep and rest. By all means, if it is really necessary for a nurse to keep on in an emergency with little rest for days at a stretch let her do so. Only, when it is not necessary, let her remember that the obligation to consider her own health and its needs is equally strong. It is not a love of self, but a knowledge of the laws of hygiene, and of the fact that those who break them invariably pay the price, that makes a nurse at a private case ask that arrangements may be made to release her temporarily, so that she may obtain the fresh air and exercise which she knows are essential if she is to keep fit.

Recreation does not necessarily or primarily imply personal enjoyment, but a renewal of those powers which must be

conserved if we are to take our part effectively in the world's work, and for this reason a nurse should bring those qualities of self discipline and self control which are developed in the course of her chosen career, to bear upon her selection of her recreations. She has chosen a serious profession, and must take herself seriously, albeit with an outward gaiety which is not assumed, but is rather the natural result of a life lived at high levels.

What recreations will best serve our double purpose of recuperation and enjoyment is largely a matter of temperament. Music, pictures, reading, dancing, games such as golf, tennis, and croquet, all have their votaries. Curiously enough the most popular pastime with nurses, as a whole, is probably dancing. One would have supposed that tired feet craved rest, and tired bodies would rebel at the physical effort demanded; but whether or no a different set of muscles are exercised to those which are employed in the day's work, whether the rhythmic poetry of motion has a soothing influence, it is certain that dance music has a magical effect upon nurses, and those who a moment before were inert, listless, manifestly tired out with a strenuous day's work will at once respond to its invitation, and bright eyed and keen will dance with enjoyment so long as the music continues. Let psychologists account for it as they will, the facts remain undeniable.

One's recreations, as most other things, are limited by the length of one's purse, but, both as giving present happiness and retrospective enjoyment, travelling, whether by land or by sea—given congenial company—ranks high in our list of recreations, and, for those with eyes to see, nothing affords at the same time a more liberal education.

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