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EDITORIAL.

AN APPEAL TO PARENTS.

The chief note in the discussion evoked by the paper on "The Present Position of Nurses in the Estimation of the Public" read by Miss Mollett at the recent meeting of the Matrons' Council, which we print in another column, was a consensus of opinion that a lack of discipline in the home training of the women who enter hospital, and the consequent undevelopment of well balanced character, was fundamentally responsible for much of the difficulty with which the matrons have to contend, in producing the type of nurse which the public consider they have the right to expect. Consequently also for the drastic criticism of the profession of nursing as a whole, owing to an insufficient supply of nurses of this high type.

Yet one of the most important qualities which parents can cultivate in their children is a sense of duty, in the development of which discipline is necessary, for a child will naturally choose the easy and pleasant way, and it is for parents and teachers so to train and direct him that, at first as a matter of obedience to authority, and later with an intelligent comprehension of the claims of duty, the child grows up to appreciate the need for self-discipline of body, mind, and soul, as the wise parent and teacher gradually relaxes control.

Discipline of the body includes those efforts which produce punctuality, courtesy, reliability, and the kindred qualities which go far to make life in common run smoothly, habits which are second nature when once acquired. Punctuality may seem a small matter but one unpunctual person wastes the time of many who keep appointments, courtesy is a duty we owe to the community, reliability is the keynote of success in life.

Discipline of the mind may be attained by obliging oneself to concentrate it upon things which entail trouble; as for instance by keeping on hand a book which requires steady and purposeful thought, as well as the lighter form of literature, which, though it may help mental cultivation, must be regarded rather as relaxation than as discipline.

Discipline of the soul—well that is a big subject, to be left to the conscience of each person to gain as best he may. Assuredly it will be at the cost of pain and difficulty, in many cases of lifelong duration.

Lack of discipline in childhood may seem of small moment, and parents frequently, and without doubt increasingly, neglect the duty of exercising it. Yet an undisciplined adult is unfitted for serious responsibility, and must painfully acquire in after life habits which should have been instilled in childhood if he is not to be seriously handicapped. Not only is the child whose parents insist on obedience far happier than the one who is spoilt, but, as he grows up, he realizes with gratitude the debt which he owes to his parents.

We have discussed this question at some length because, we hear on all sides, that the prevailing lack of discipline is felt in the nursing schools and amongst nurses of all ranks; probationers who have never been accustomed to discipline at home resent it when it is enforced in a hospital. Yet an almost military discipline is the key note of good nursing, and, we appeal to parents, upon whom the early training which influences the whole after life of a child inevitably falls, to maintain the golden mean between the severity of a century or two ago, and the unwise indulgence characteristic of the present age, so that whatever profession or occupation their children subsequently enter they may be self-reliant, courteous, reliable, disciplined and useful members of society.

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