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EDITORIAL.

WHAT THE PUBLIC EXPECTS OF ITS NURSES.

There is no doubt that the public estimate of the obligations of the trained nurse is a high one. It expects of her a standard of life and conduct demanded of no other section of the community, except the clergy, together with professional skill, and the capacity to make herself congenial to all sorts and conditions of people.

And the vox populi is right. The woman who adopts nursing as a profession deliberately chooses one which touches the grave issues of life. Into her care, often more dependent upon her than a child upon its mother, come the sick, the sorrowful, the broken in life's battle, to her, under the direction of the medical practitioner, is committed the ministry of healing. And no one knows better how dependent the health of the body is upon that of the mind, and how often this must be set at rest before much improvement can be hoped for in the bodily condition. It not infrequently happens that the troubles which oppress the burdened mind are confided to the nurse, and before going to any new case it is well for her to realize that it may demand all the "endurance, foresight, strength, and skill" which she can command. Women of the very highest type professionally and personally are needed as trained nurses.

But if the public will pause for a moment to think, they will realize that the nurse-training schools are not alone responsible for the making of trained nurses, but that they themselves must co-operate with the schools if the best results are to be attained. The nurse who receives her certificate at the end of a term of three years is the finished product, not of her training school alone, but of all the years which have gone

before. It is true that in this period of special training not only professional skill is imparted, but that immature and unformed characters are deepened and broadened. But the probationer should, when she enters upon her training, be inspired with the aspirations, and possessed of the qualities, which will develop under wise guidance and make her, in time, the type of nurse which this country is proud to own, who, entering a house a stranger, in a time of sickness and trouble, will take with her an atmosphere of strength and consolation, so that not only the patient, but the troubled household instinctively trust her and rely upon her.

It is during the impressionable years which precede her training that a girl largely absorbs the views which colour her outlook on life. If she enters a hospital with little idea of the claims of duty, irresponsible, pleasure loving, bent on having a good time, she will scarcely in three short years, in addition to the high degree of technical skill which she will have to acquire, attain to the standard of personal perfection expected by the public of its nurses. Unselfishness, devotion to duty, endurance, mental strength, are qualities of slow growth which should be instilled both by precept and example from childhood upwards.

If mothers would regard their small daughters as possible probationers in embryo, and endeavour to develop in them the qualities which they expect as a matter of course in their nurses, the training schools would be provided with material to work upon which only presents itself at present to a very limited extent. That they need first-class material is evident to anyone who obtains an insight into the work required of nurses. We have been greatly impressed by the disciplined skill of those whose help has been so freely given at the Nursing Exhibit in Woman's Kingdom, Olympia.

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