

MY FIRST WARD.

HINTS TO V.A.D.S WILLING TO TRAIN.

My dream was to come true. After having waited for a year as an accepted candidate for training I was now to enter one of the largest hospitals in London.

I had received previous training in a small hospital and had since worked in fever hospitals, sanatoriums and infirmaries. I had done district work in the East end of London and in remote country villages. I held my C.M.B. certificate, and there had fallen to my share a fair amount of private nursing. Evidently the Sister in charge of the preliminary training home, where I had spent the last six months, had heard all about me, and very difficult had it been to live through the veiled scorn she had meted out to me. All that was over now. I had passed my examinations with honour. I had had a short holiday, and was actually to begin my hospital life.

When I arrived, the blinds were drawn in the wards and the lights were turned low. I remember thinking how early it was for the patients to be settled for the night. I was taken to the nurses' home, shown my room, and left to unpack. When I had finished I went to bed and slept soundly.

I was awakened early by the sun shining into my room. It was early spring. I rose, feeling light-hearted and determined. I was going to be the best probationer ever known. No one would hear me speak of my previous experience; I would do nothing until I had been shown the hospital way. There would be difficulties no doubt, but at any rate I could do as I was told, and I knew I could be good to the patients. If my previous experience had taught me nothing else, so far as general training goes, it had taught me to understand the people with whom I had to deal. This was a great asset. Of technical knowledge I had very little, but, as I did not profess any, that did not matter. I was there to be taught.

I had just fastened my stiff collar and cuffs, and had looked at myself in the glass for the last time to see that my cap was quite straight, when a probationer who had been in hospital two months came to take me down to breakfast. What a delightful meal it was! How quickly we were served with steaming hot coffee, bacon, and brown crisp rolls! I wondered how it was all managed. Afterwards she took me to the ward and began at once to instruct me in my various duties. She told me how to sweep in the best and quickest way, and taught me to find dust in all the odd corners. To this day I am grateful to that probationer.

When Sister came into the ward two hours after our entrance I was formally introduced to her. Imagine my surprise when she shook hands with me. I blessed her for it then, and I bless her for it now. I felt at home and welcomed at once, and no subsequent trials have driven the feeling away.

During the very first day I had the pleasure of walking round the ward when the physician paid

his visit. My previous experience helped me here. I could take an intelligent interest in all he said. By the end of the day I knew every patient, what they were suffering from, and how they were being treated.

I had thought much more menial work would fall to my share than proved to be the case. For a week I swept and dusted. Then Sister said to me:

"Have you had any training before?"

"Yes, a little," I answered.

I think she thought I was reluctant to talk of it, and did not question me further. But I felt her watching me more closely afterwards. I shall never forget that Sister. She ruled by love and love alone. I realised this the first time I heard her read the hospital prayer.

At the end of a week I was allowed to take temperatures and give medicines. With someone to help me I could make thirteen beds in twenty-five minutes. And when I could wash a patient all over in fifteen minutes I felt I had achieved something. I learnt, after a time, to work much faster. I, who had previously been accustomed to do the details of my work in a leisurely way, could now in an emergency do such things as the changing of bed clothes, the "taking in" of a new patient, or the "sending out" of an old one in a very short time.

"I have still five minutes," I soon used to say to myself. "I can do this and that and something else." The use of time quickly became a fine art.

I was told that the ward was an easy one. I have found out since that it was. It held thirteen patients, and for these we had three nurses. I have worked much harder since.

My first impressions have carried me through many trying times; they have helped me to see the good in all I have had to do. I must say it: Everything went smoothly, quietly and evenly. It was in such a way as this that some day I hoped to manage a ward of my own.

CLARA EVERITT.

NEW RESIDENTIAL CLUB.

Mrs. Northwood (*née* Beardsley), who, before her marriage was a member of the Registered Nurses' Society, is, with Miss Simpson, shortly opening a Residential Club for Nurses and other lady workers, at 6, Nottingham Place, W., in addition to her popular house in Devonshire Street. The house is being furnished by Maple, and Mrs. Northwood has brought her practical experience as a private nurse to bear on its arrangements. There is to be a gas stove with hob in the bedrooms, with a penny-in-the-slot meter; and only the difficulty of getting the work done has compelled her to reluctantly defer—for the present—having hot and cold water laid on in every room. In the dining room, the meals will be served at small tables, a plan always appreciated by nurses. We wish all success to the new club, which is open to ladies visiting London, and to those who desire temporary quarters while taking up some special branch of study.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)