

MISS WOOD pointed to the ideal woman as sketched in the Book of Proverbs, as the woman who was fitted to train into the best Nurse, and brought out the fact that Nursing is, of all professions, the one best qualified to develop the highest part of the woman's nature. The subjects she has to study, the work that she has to do, the demand made upon her sympathies, endurance, gentleness, tact, and skill are all calculated to bring out the womanly nature at its best and highest.

THE CHAIRMAN opened the discussion by pointing out that the self-reliance of which Miss Wood had spoken had a certain danger. He would have the Nurse remember that, like the soldier, her ruling characteristic should be obedience. Her length of training would teach her that discipline, which is obedience. Self-reliance, however valuable a quality, should never shove obedience out of the way. As to sympathy, he thought even that virtue might be carried too far, if the sympathy is so acute as to disable those who should bring help. Active work to relieve suffering is the best cure for such over-sensitiveness. With regard to the professional knowledge of which Miss Wood had spoken, he would deprecate learned talk; a lady who is not pedantic, and who does not think it necessary to use a would-be professional and strange phraseology, is always an acceptable ally to the doctor. The Chairman also asked the lecturer whether the competition was very severe in the nursing world, and whether Nurses generally thought the hours of work too long. What, lastly, was the proportion of failures to successes amongst those who took up the profession of nursing?

MISS E. M. WADE said she wished to thank Miss Wood for dwelling on the higher side of a Nurse's life. In a large ward one was apt to forget that the whole of nursing does not consist in taking temperatures and making poultices.

MISS WOOD: I quite agree with our chairman as to the necessity of obedience in a Nurse. The responsibility of the treatment of the patient lies with the Doctor, and the Nurse should not criticise his methods, but carry out his instructions. As regards competition, there is a great deal of it, and yet when I am asked to find a Nurse for this or that post, I cannot find them. Nurses are many, but good Nurses rare. During the last twenty years, women have flocked into the profession, but there is plenty of room for these in India and in the Colonies. If Nurses will go abroad there is plenty of work for them. As to the hours, Nursing can never be arranged like other labour, because sickness cannot be arranged. Of course

there is need for methodical arrangement, but in all Hospitals there come times of heavy pressure, and if a Nurse at the end of eight or ten hours had to go off duty, the extra work would never be done. Fixed hours are impossible.

THE CHAIRMAN: Admitting this, how many hours' rest do you contemplate giving in the twenty-four?

MISS WOOD: Twelve hours off duty and twelve hours on—and then not always absolutely on duty, but merely within call; they should get a day once a month, and if possible half a day every fortnight. As to the suggestion of *three* changes of Nurses in the twenty-four hours, it would mean extra expenses, more sleeping accommodation, and a different set of meals, and therefore it is practically impossible at present.

Then with regard to the proportion of failures; I should say that quite half of those who apply at the Hospitals for training are failures. They give it up almost immediately. Of those who stay and go through their training about a third make a real success, and become leaders in the professional world; the rest being more or less satisfactory. The failures among those who get through their training are mostly due to a false idea of what Nursing is; the Nurse fancies she will be regarded as an angel, and become the recipient of her patients' confidences, and the sordid realities of her work revolt her. The lack of physical strength is often a difficulty, but even here it is more often a question of endurance, self-control, and power of will.

MISS INGALL asked whether a proper system of examination would not raise the standard. As to the question of nurses getting appointments abroad, the difficulty was to know how to set about it, and the providing of the money for the journey and the necessary outfit. She could not too strongly endorse Miss Wood's remarks on the hours of work, and wished to add her testimony to the willingness with which Nurses undertook the extra duty and endured the long hours when necessary.

MISS WOOD: The question of examinations is all yet in embryo. As regards going abroad, we wish members to use the Offices of the Association as a centre of information. We are now so organised as to be in communication with foreign places where Trained Nurses are wanted, and the outfit and passage money is often provided by the Hospital or Institution which needs the Nurse.

THE CHAIRMAN pointed out certain practical difficulties in the way of the examination of Nurses by any public body.

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