

A TRAINED LEADER FROM AMONG NURSES.

BY A MEMBER OF THE NURSES' MISSIONARY LEAGUE.

I think the thought of being a trained leader in the nursing profession is one which must appeal to a great number of nurses who are now considering the question of "what to do next."

During the years of war our time and thoughts have been fully occupied with doing the obvious "next thing," wherever we have been placed. Some of us have had experience which will go far toward equipping us in powers of organisation and general up-to-dateness in methods and appliances of modern surgery. Some have been privileged to work under some of the best and keenest physicians and surgeons of our day. I think all may be said to have had their chance of doing their "bit" in the service of our country, whether in military hospitals, or in the less glorified, but equally necessary work among civilians.

What, then, are the necessary qualifications for the trained leader among nurses? and how can they be put to the best use?

Character and Personality.—We all know the difference in the tone of a ward which is run by a sister with a strong character and personality, and that run by one who is weak and vacillating. When there is an air of brightness, combined with discipline, in the Sister, it is reflected in the attitude of the nurses towards the patients, and it is very rarely that the patients do not respond to it.

Qualifications.—Obviously the better qualified the nurse is in the many branches of her profession, as well as in outside thought and reading, the more fitted she will be to be a leader in the profession.

Organisation.—She may have character and professional qualifications, but the true leader must also have powers of organisation, and an aptitude for training others. It is one thing to be at the head of affairs and hold all the strings in our own hands, so to speak, but it is another thing to train others to be fitted to carry on in our absence, and if illness or necessity should arise, to take over the reins in such a manner that the work does not suffer.

Ideal.—I have purposely left this subject until the end, though it is by far the most important of the qualifications of a leader among nurses. It includes the mere fact of the ability to respond to dire human need; the possibility of giving one's best and highest in practical sympathy for the sufferer; and above all, the true source from whence all springs, viz., Love, the very love which is personified in Him who went about healing and preaching, and an example that we with our special gifts should do likewise.

A great Missionary Society at its Annual Meeting this year resolved "To plead for officers of service, especially from trained leaders, educa-

tionists, doctors and nurses." Surely the thought of the Ideal leads us on to consider this plea, and to think of the many opportunities for trained leaders to use not only their qualifications but their lives in the highest and most fruitful, though sad to say the most needy of all work, the foreign mission field. And why are Leaders wanted? Firstly, because in so many cases it is pioneer work. Whereas there are dozens of Nurses in a European hospital, in the mission field the nurse may find that she is the only one in the whole district. She will probably find herself responsible for running a hospital, organising the work and training probationers from the rawest material, and bearing the thousand and one cares of up-to-date work with possibly, at first, a minimum amount of equipment. Secondly, because the need is great, and the cases often far more difficult to nurse than in more civilised conditions. Thirdly, because, above all, it is her business to reflect the love and character of the Master whom she serves.

The average working years of a nurse's life number from 20 to 25 at the most; after that she must give place to a younger and more up-to-date generation, even if health does not oblige her to retire before. How necessary then to decide to put those few years of our life to the best and highest use.

Medical Missions Exhibition.—At the end of this month there is to be a United Medical Missions Exhibition at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square. Doctors and nurses will there have exceptional opportunities of seeing and hearing something of true Medical Missionary work. Go to it whether interested or not, and see for yourself what the needs are, and see if it is not, perhaps, your vocation to become a leader from among nurses in this great and glorious cause.

THE BISHOP OF LONDON ON THE SCANDALOUS MISUSE OF NURSES' UNIFORM.

The Bishop of London, speaking at a meeting of the Diocesan Preventive Council, at the Church House, on Monday, said that the war had awakened us to what the Bible called "the corruption that is in the world through lust." Speaking of the state of our open spaces as a scandal, the Bishop said that a verified statement of what had been seen in the parks and open spaces was now before the County Council. An official was recently scandalised to see seven women in the uniform of Nurses lying about with soldiers in one of our open spaces. It was unfortunately true that it was one of the commonest pretences for women to assume Nurses' uniform.

It is also scandalous that vested interests have for thirty years prevented the passing of a Nurses' Registration Act, giving Nurses the power to regulate their profession, including the protection of its uniform.

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