

say to the effect that when her daughter went up for an examination, she always saw to it that the child wore her best clothes. Sound knowledge of human nature underlay her theories, for there is no doubt that dress does at times, and particularly in the cases of certain individuals, exercise an extraordinary influence upon the mind. In the discussion, preliminary to the present article, the question arose as to why this should be greater in the case of a woman than of a man. It may be so because, in former years, women lived a very much more narrowed existence than men, but a very different factor may account for the influence of a woman's attire upon her mentality. She is naturally very much more psychic than man, very much more able to sense the thoughts and feelings of those about her, and it is just possible that, in quite a subconscious way, she realises any effect her dress is exercising, apart from any mental qualities, in influencing those in whose company she finds herself. Thus it may be, and it is due in no way to vanity that, when well and suitably dressed, she can pass through the ordeal of some important interview or examination with greater success than might be the case if she regarded herself as little more than a sort of coat hanger. In still another aspect we might trace a certain psychic sense in regard to dress, and this is to be found in the curious aversion which many people have to ready-made clothes. There is no doubt that the feeling of the creator of an exquisite piece of china or other work of art, continues to affect certain people, who contact it perhaps centuries after, in a strange, intangible way, far removed from their appreciation of its beautiful workmanship. There are those, and this applies especially to the Scotch, who will get far more pleasure out of a garment made by their own fingers than one bought ready-made at a shop, however perfectly it may be cut. This pleasure may be traceable, although in a different direction, to the same unexplained causes which produce the effects referred to in the case of the piece of old china; for to the ready-made garment there cling certain curious, psychic connections with the suffering arising from sweated labour perhaps, or to the grinding out of soulless work for the sake of hard cash. Also the love of seeing something grow under one's fingers, the inherent longing to create, may be another psychological influence productive of the preferences referred to.

The ability to take a certain pleasure in her dress is a saving grace in a nurse. In whatever branch of the profession she may find herself she is cut off from many of the interests and amusements in which her sisters find opportunity for re-creation (the word is used here in its literal sense) and this lack of opportunity, of escape from all the strain and anxiety incurred through nursing work, has often produced really disastrous results. Since publishing recently the summary of a lecture on Mental Hygiene, we have had many suggestions as to suitable hobbies for nurses and, in all seriousness, venture to suggest that many

of them have been able to make a far greater success of their qualifications, and to retain an infinitely greater capacity for enjoying and getting the best out of life because of the pleasure they have been able to find, within due limits, in dress.

But this brings us to the question of the fitness of things, and it certainly is not calculated to enhance a nurse's opportunities if she arrives at a patient's house dressed in the very height of fashion and in the flamboyant and ill-contrasting colours that help to lead us to the conviction at the present day that, after all, we are but living in an age of glorified savagery. If a nurse can dress in such utter disharmony with conditions of sickness and suffering existing in the house which she is entering, it is a foregone conclusion that, with rare exceptions, she will also be in disharmony with her patient as regards temperament, understanding, sympathy and other qualities which so much enhance her value to the sick. The attire of the inverted candlestick is as incongruous in the home where there is sickness as ever was the floating crinoline, and consideration of this aspect of the subject brings us back to the old conclusion which meets us in connection with both national and social questions, however trivial, that perfection and real success lie in finding the balance, in getting as near to the equilibrium as possible, and thereby we arrive at the conclusion that nurses, while cultivating a certain taste and individuality in their dress, should neither affect the extremes of fashion nor wear a dress stereotyped in the years of their childhood.

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#### APPOINTMENT.

Miss Violet Cobbett has been appointed School Nurse under the London County Council. Miss Cobbett is a member of the Council of the Royal British Nurses' Association, and takes a very keen interest in Nursing Politics and in various social questions. She is one of the younger members of the R.B.N.A. Nevertheless she has managed to see a great deal of life both in England and abroad. During the war she did military work in France, and, previously to this, held an appointment in Spain. Recently she has been gaining experience in health work at an important welfare centre.

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#### THE ROYAL CHARTER.

Nurses desirous of obtaining copies of their Royal Charter can obtain them by writing to the Secretary, 10, Orchard Street, for 1s. 3d. (post free). Every nurse should possess a copy of this historical document, as their Association is the only body of nurses possessing a Royal Charter.

ISABEL MACDONALD,

*Secretary to the Corporation.*

10, Orchard Street, W.

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