

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,692.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1920.

Vol. LXV

EDITORIAL.

THE ESSENCE OF GOOD NURSING.

It is well in adopting any work in life to keep definitely in mind what we should aim at achieving thereby, and every probationer who enters our nurse training schools should be helped to realise the objects of the instruction she will there receive.

Primarily, most girls enter upon a nursing career as a means of self-support, and it is a laudable object. But, when the decision has been taken, the aspirant for training must remember that she has chosen a career which, from some aspects is specially difficult, and requires special qualifications, natural and acquired. She will not have to deal with inanimate material which can be moulded at will, but with human beings, whose co-operation with her efforts for their welfare she must endeavour to secure, if the best results are to be obtained. She should therefore take every possible opportunity of studying human nature, for in the course of her work she will meet with humanity at its best and at its worst, and if she is to deal successfully with both, and with the large mass of people who come into neither of those categories, she must be a student, and a lover, of the human race, realising that it finds self-expression in a variety of forms, that "it takes all sorts to make a world," and that her sympathies should be wide enough to include them all. A real reverence for their humanity, whatever its outward manifestation, will be the greatest lever in her possession for raising it to a higher level in those instances where self-respect has been wounded, and she will be wise to adopt the poet's counsel:—

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;

Though they may gang a kennin wrang,
To step aside is human.
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving why they do it!
And just as lamely can ye mark
How far, perhaps, they rue it.

So much for the general outlook of the nurse upon the human material. Her special attitude should be a passion for health as the birthright of every human being, and consequently, her fixed aim will be to aid in the prevention and cure of disease, in the relief of suffering, and the consolation of the sick and the dying.

In order that she may achieve these ends, she will set herself steadfastly to acquire knowledge, for the help that she will eventually bring to her patients will not be merely that of a person of good will, but of a trained and competent expert. That is what the public pay for, and have a right to expect. Ignorance in the untrained is to be expected, in the trained it is unpardonable and dangerous. And with knowledge as a basis she will spare no pains to acquire professional skill, including the gentle touch, deft manipulation, alertness in the observation of symptoms, sureness and swiftness in dealing with critical situations and emergencies, so that her confidence is infectious, and the patient is comforted and tranquilised. Consider this as an asset in successfully dealing with a sudden case of hæmorrhage, and many similar instances could be given.

To conclude: the essence of good nursing is to surround the patient with an atmosphere of comfort and tranquility, and with competent care based on knowledge. No pains are too great to acquire dexterity in manipulation and in the art of healing both mind and body.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)