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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PRIVATE NURSING.

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In the course of a fairly long experience in private practice one sometimes analyses the various opinions regarding its advantages and disadvantages. These often come to light in after-dinner discussions round the drawing-room fire of an evening in the Club, for we are a democratic family, representing all shades of Professional thought and opinion. There is something to be said for both points of view, *i.e.*, that Private Nursing is ideal for the well-trained woman of independent mind and initiative, and that it is the dull, colourless thing, full of chance and change, as some of our friends find it. Somewhere between these two opinions lies the truth.

At the outset we must admit that some nurses are better suited to the work than others, and it is, therefore, easier for those lucky ones to attain success. Yet experience teaches that no one can "make good" in any vocation unless he has an enthusiastic love for it, and is happy in its prosecution. Nursing has no parallel in any of the other professions in so far as it is an absorbing occupation. There are no free evenings quite away from the atmosphere of work, nor the welcome week-end; so that Nursing must mean more to the worker if it is not to become stale and exacting.

When all has been said about the pros. and cons. of Private Nursing, however, we miss the main issue, which is a personal one. The Psychology of Private Nursing is greater than the work itself. In other words, unless we know, without doubt, that it is our metier, and are consciously successful in it, we are living far below the possibilities it has to offer. The conditions and difficulties, when these latter do not exist entirely in our imagination, are countered by its advantages and compensations. It, therefore, occurred to me that a discussion on paper with my young friends—delightful girls all, and keen on their job—would be most profitable, taking first and briefly its psychological aspect.

We get out of life in exact proportion to our contribution to it. Neither more nor less. The

balances are seldom apparent to our fellows, but they are to ourselves *always*. At the Citadel of our being, Eternal Justice reigns, and as our lives ring true by conscious loyalty to our ideal, we are successful and happy. "Nothing can cheat you out of ultimate success but yourself," says Emerson; and when we are rightly occupied happiness grows out of work, as the colour petals out of a fruitful flower.

Duty well done is good, but it is not enough. Only when allied to some high ideal, of which good work is the counterpart, does the law of sequence, or cause and effect, operate. Our sub-conscious mind is storing up the impressions, which in their turn give back to us the verve of attainment, and the certainty of success. Auto-suggestion, that powerful lever for the re-education and uplift of the Thought-life of man, which this age is using, is no occult and mysterious thing. Simply put, it supplies the knowledge by which we may get the best out of ourselves and out of life, as Eternal Justice intended we should. There is nothing miraculous in its working, nor will it do for us what we should do for ourselves. Yet it enables our conscious minds to select the best and the highest. The reflex influence of the practice of auto-suggestion is that our lives are lived *from within outwards*, and we are less easily affected by external circumstances. In times of crisis and difficulty that Force within makes us strong and calm, and enables us to decide aright—"No flies in the ointment though," no self-will, nor self-pleasing! The only attitude of mind that never errs is: "Not my will but Thine be done."

Private nursing is not easy; no work worth while ever is; and there are difficulties peculiar to this interesting branch of the service alone; but our mental viewpoint adjusts to the needs of the work, as it grows and develops in attraction. An attraction which is impersonal and detached, and solely for the good of others.

Loyalty to our Profession and an enthusiasm for its honour, are the prerogatives very largely of the private nurse, because she represents all the Profession stands for to the lay public, among whom her lot is cast to a greater extent than the Hospital Nurse. Here one would like to say a

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