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## THE MENTAL ATTITUDE IN PRIVATE NURSING.

On Wednesday, October 31st, Sister A. E. Macdonald gave an address on the Mental Attitude in Private Nursing, and Mr. Donaldson, Member of the General Nursing Council, took the chair. In commencing, Sister Macdonald said that she did not wish to give a lecture, but merely to speak as a worker to workers, in order that so far as possible one might help another by subsequent discussion. She pointed out that the basis of her remarks might be found in articles which had recently appeared in the nursing press, and continuing, said that when the affirmation was made that the Psychology of Private Nursing is greater than the work itself it was but stating a principle applicable to life in general. We get from life in exact proportion to our contribution to it, rather less than more, for the banker is just rather than generous; it is the bounden duty of everyone to lay up in store for the proverbial rainy day, and only a rogue or a fool would gainsay this. But, if our main object in life is to acquire, we contribute nothing to the general good, and we starve that other self which cannot live by bread alone. Burns expressed this thought well when he said:

"Not for tae hide it in a hedge,  
Nor wi' a train attendant,  
But for the glorious privilege  
Tae mak us independent."

Dr. Rudyard Kipling gave voice to the same sentiment the other day: "A man may apply his independence to what he calls worldly advantage and discover too late that he has made himself dependent on a mass of worldly conditions for the maintenance of which he has sacrificed himself. So he may be festooned with the whole haberdashery of success and go to his grave a castaway."

Some of us find our ideals in private nursing, others find it merely a means to an end, and each has to dispose of one personal question—whether or no private nursing is her metier. If it is not so, then no adjustment of the mental attitude will make it so. Certain types of mind are happier in hospital, where the routine enables them to fit into a certain niche and work there. Such people find private practice well-nigh impossible to them.

As regards the economic point of view, Sister Macdonald said that she believed that the advantage lay with the nurse in hospital owing to the heavy expenditure involved in carrying on private practice and the irregularity of employment. She did not propose to deal with economic questions, however, save that she would reiterate the slogan, "Until the remuneration of the trained nurse is at least equal to that of kindred workers in the Civil Service and the Teaching Professions our honoured service will continue to be at an economic disadvantage."

The lecturer next referred to the nurse in private work, successful in this work but not happy in the doing of it—capable, kind, wise, and adaptable, but up against conditions that try one to the breaking point. In such a case the nurse is living far below the level of her possibilities because of her attitude towards her work. The difficulties may be great but only when work is allied to some ideal can it react to the advantage of the worker. The law of sequence operates when the aesthetic and the practical unite in life; therefore we hold that duty in itself cannot satisfy. Auto-suggestion so educates and trains the sub-conscious strata that in turn it reacts upon conscious thought, and then we approach work from a different angle. Life must be lived from within outwards that we may be less easily affected by external circumstances. To be bearers of hope and comfort to patients, as well as of plasters and potions, we must see life from the standpoint of Matthew Arnold:

"A peace amid the city's jar,  
Man did not make and cannot mar."

Hope and assurance for the future is every patient's need and the nurse's mental attitude should be such as to create the "atmosphere" unconsciously in which such attributes can grow. Within ourselves lie untapped sources of supply to draw strength from. With even a tentative belief in the power of thought the daily practice of auto-suggestion will establish that belief. At the beginning of each day hold one affirmative thought of well being, health, success or attainment poised in the mind for two minutes, and the gradual result of such exercise will be confidence and stability otherwise unattainable. By such methods we attract success. Acknowledgment of the fundamental principle that thought controls and

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