

II.—PROFESSIONAL NURSING JOURNALISTS.

The day has now definitely passed when a line of demarcation divided literature and journalism. To be worthy of recognition the modern journalist must be a person of parts. He must be inspired by the soul of an artist; his pen in action may be the pencil or brush of the painter, the mallet of the sculptor, or the bow of the musician. All his senses must be keenly alert, penetrating vision must probe far and deep, sound be conveyed on every wave, and his heartbeats must respond to the human touch. The man whose pen cannot convey vividly to paper what he sees, hears, feels, and imagines will never attain fame as a journalist. He is a person of infinite variety. Perhaps that is the reason why, when an efficient Nursing Journalist is urgently needed for an important position, the five continents may be searched for her in vain.

No School for Nursing Journalists has yet been established; if one were opened to-morrow it is doubtful whether it would secure a sufficiency of pupils, and yet professional journalism affords an honourable, and an intensely interesting occupation. To find it a satisfying and indeed an absorbing life, one must understand the motives which impel nurses to abandon a career that has brought them contentment and happiness—as does nursing to those who have a true vocation—for one which is extremely exacting, the material recompense for which is limited, and the prizes few.

The talent for journalism must be differentiated from other forms of literature; the flair for journalism is of distinct and brilliant quality.

I have been asked to deal with the training of the professional Nursing Journalist, which one would naturally assume should be obtained in an editorial office under the direction of a professional editor. It must at once be admitted that these opportunities are so few as to be negligible, and that such editors have, so far, been almost invariably women already engrossed in important nursing work, who, because of their realisation that a professional voice in the press was indispensable in the struggle for professional self-determination, gained experience in the highly technical subject of editing a journal by individual effort.

In Great Britain and other countries altruistic nurses have come forward and heroically assumed the burden of organising, editing, and financing journals devoted to the interests of the Nursing profession at large. It is still, however, probably true to state, that the only professional Nursing Journal maintaining an adequately remunerated editorial staff is the *American Journal of Nursing*, and in this connection American nurses have proved their professional acumen and loyalty.

The professional press has been a powerful and live influence owing to the heroic efforts of one or more nurses in countries where a Nursing Journal is maintained, who have expended upon it a plenitude of unmeasured devotion which money alone could never have secured.

But though in the early days of nursing organisation this has been inevitable, we cannot contemplate the permanence of such conditions as tolerable. We must look forward, in the future, to professional journals (and by professional journals I mean journals owned, edited and controlled by nurses) being adequately financed by the profession, and in a position to offer remunerative work to nurses who have the necessary qualifications.

Where then are those who aspire to become professional Nursing Journalists to acquire the technique of their craft?

In the first place we must realise that there are many phases of journalism. Not all who desire to practise it contemplate attaining to the dizzy height of the editorial chair, with its manifold responsibilities—the direction of the policy of a paper, the maintenance of a high literary standard, the judgment to discern what to include, and what

to omit, the courage and tenacity of purpose demanded; for the primary object of a professional journal is not to make big dividends, desirable and important as these are. Its *raison d'être* is to uphold the true interests of the profession, and the public it serves, to have the vision to realise what these are, and the courage to advocate them.

The qualifications of a journalist should include shorthand and typewriting, in order that she may promptly present interesting reports for publication. She must be expert in proof correcting, and understand the make-up and the lay-out of a paper. For these she needs the mind of a mathematician and the eye of an artist, in addition to the power of concentration, an unlimited capacity for drudgery, a love of detail, and a passion for accuracy.

Some of these qualifications depend on personality, which ultimately is a big factor in deciding success or otherwise, but for acquiring the technique necessary to all journalists (which might well include practical experience in the Printing House) there are Schools of Journalism where it is taught. So essential is it to the nursing profession that some of its members should possess the knowledge thus obtainable that I suggest the urgency of founding scholarships to enable selected nurses to acquire it under carefully regulated conditions. We have realised the importance and the benefit of such Foundations in other branches of our profession, and the dearth, and the need, of Professional Nursing Journalists is obvious, I believe, to all of us.

To the nurse with the pen of a ready writer, and the inspiration to serve her profession and the community effectively, the life of a journalist has a compelling attraction. The printed word reaches thousands where the spoken word is heard by few. As a journalist on the staff of a professional paper it is her high privilege to help in the formation of professional and public opinion, to direct these into courses pregnant with benefit for the good of both, and extending indeed to "all the creatures both in sea and land" for

"Only to man Thou hast made known Thy ways,
And put the pen alone into his hand,
And made him secretary of Thy praise."

Such far-reaching power and responsibility should be entrusted only to nurses of the highest type.

Why should not the curricula for the Nurse Secretary and the Nurse Journalist be included in the educational scheme of the Florence Nightingale International Foundation?

I leave with you the consideration of how such students are to be found, selected, trained and employed.

OPENING OF DISCUSSION.

BY

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Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, as has been her distinguished custom, has set such a high standard in her inspirational discussion of the preparation of secretaries and editors that I can hope only to elaborate on what she has said.

The country which I represent has such a large number of nurses that it is natural that we should have a relatively large number of nurses holding some type of secretarial position which may or may not combine with the secretarial some editorial function.

They fall into three general classes:

(1) Executive secretaries of the national organisations—Broad experience, administrative ability, a gift for people are the outstanding requirements;

(2) Executive secretaries of state nurses' associations and secretaries of state boards of nurse examiners. In a few cases one person holds both of the positions;

(3) Secretaries in nursing school offices and in doctors' offices. I have had the privilege of studying some of the material in *job analysis* of the work of executive secretaries to some of the

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