

That something of masculine selfishness finds there a part, we in no wise doubt, but the problem is stated and will be resolved without us—or in spite of us—if we do not regard it frankly and from the point of view of our profession.

The points (a) and (g) are a grave warning to our Schools. In fact, if the technical preparation of our probationer nurses is becoming day by day more adapted to the needs of the profession; if the study of the movement, the standing of the actions is carried to a high degree of perfection, is the human factor not too often neglected?

Already a reaction against the mathematic rigidity of the nurse as regards the patient is noticeable. But the exigencies of a certain routine in the work, a strict uniformity in the training centres, the constant straining after a more perfect adaptation to established rule, tend to render mechanical the probationer and the nurse. And girls whose personality has not been established by a considerable preliminary culture, moral and social, become gradually and imperceptibly automatic and indifferent.

But how is this intelligent and persevering dynamic force to be roused in them?

If we recognise that the defective attitude of the probationer has always or almost always in its psychological manifestations physical causes, are the schools organised in such a way as to provide a remedy? . . .

At the base of lives of failure, and of careers defective and disappointing, there is a flagrant want of adaptability of the individual with an inclination too one-sided for the complex towards which he strives.

Now, in our Schools of Nursing are we not inclining towards a premature specialisation?

In countries where the nursing profession is in its infancy, probationers have hardly reached maturity, they carry a heavy burden of scholastic attainments, essentially bookish. And if in the course of their probationer years they receive elements of practical and social science, it is from the quite specific angle of their profession alone. They will become nurses without being women; they will have chosen a way of life without understanding what constitutes Life; they rush into a profession, the most difficult of all, without knowledge of themselves.

The numerous failures we have to record, which constitute a serious economic loss for Schools and Hospital organisations, the lack of adaptability, not to mention the moral recoil of the nurses, the decrease in the number of the best elements, are not these sad facts but too self-evident? But may they not have a common origin?

Have professional aptitudes been built on a knowledge of the whole personality of the probationer?

Has she been given the opportunity and the possibility of expanding in every sense?

These questions resume in brief this preface which is somewhat long, since it exposes the problem whilst indicating the solutions.

1st.—As regards her new life, the future nurse should be armed: (a) morally; (b) physically; and (c) intellectually before being equipped professionally.

2nd.—No class of womankind to-day can be isolated from the preoccupations of her environment, her sex, her nation.

3rd.—The profession of the nurse must be based upon household science and practice in a more effective and vivid fashion.

4th.—Since one or two years separate the normal end of general study from the minimum age required for entrance into the Schools for Nursing, this period must be utilised for the harmonious development of the candidate, thanks to a curriculum rational, definite and all-embracing.

(a) We know that a good scholastic career may be an indication of intellectual qualities, but may prove nothing as regards character, and that we must put to the proof the intellectual and emotional qualities which play an important

part in nursing before we decide upon the true vocation of the candidate.

(b) In Belgium, and in many other countries also, of course, the candidate may be received at seventeen. She is far from having finished growing. The professional task will take possession of her without giving her the leisure or the possibility of practising a physical culture sufficient to counter-balance her sedentary life. Organic physiological and psychic troubles appear inevitably in those whom a previous enthusiasm, custom, bent towards physical exercises have not given an impulse sufficiently irresistible for them to be capable of surmounting the fatigue and the weariness of the first stages, so as to devote themselves daily and spontaneously to the practice of some sport.

But how can she do so unless she finds herself sustained by sympathetic and favourable surroundings and unless her previous studies (and this is not of frequent occurrence) have prepared her for such?

(c) The intellectual formation of the nurse enriches itself at an accelerated pace—that is to say, in proportion as the curricula and instruction are placed at the disposal of scientific progress. It is pursued very far in some schools, but generally speaking, within the exclusive limits of the profession.

(2.)

Many nations have gone before us in the emancipation of woman. And our delay is undoubtedly due in great measure to the indifference of the "woman content with her lot" as opposed to the needs and difficulties of her toiling sisters.

But the want of interest of woman in the conditions of life of women is met with also in professional circles. The profession exercises an excessively tyrannical hold and tends to monopolise for its sole benefit the interest and the preoccupation of those who live it.

How shall the nurse—whose mind during her training was turned, to the exclusion of everything else, towards her specialisation—escape from the narrowness of her preoccupations to discern the currents of opinions and of ideas, to interest herself therein objectively, to find her way in their labyrinths and possess a thought sufficiently free and prudent to bring to them a collaboration independent, wise, but old?

It is of the utmost importance to guide the girl—the nurse of to-morrow—towards her mission of citizenship.

(3.)

The world is full of women for whom the atmosphere of the home no longer exists and who are incapable of undertaking either the care or management of it.

In accordance with the recent researches of the National Committee on Nutrition, created by the Ministry of Public Health, it is stated that, if errors in diet are responsible for family deficiencies in 50 per cent. of the population, house-keeping incompetence manifests itself in all social circles and causes considerable loss to the country through wastefulness and useless expenditure.

It may therefore be concluded that the economic situation of the nation would be immediately improved—nay completely put right—if each household were to become an intelligent consumer through perfect management.

It is then perfectly clear that a body of workers destined to be enrolled amongst the "missionaries of hygiene" must be initiated into all the questions concerned with good household organisation.

(4.)

The post-school months will be utilised in a valuable manner—to fill up the gaps at the basis of general instruction, to prepare harmoniously and completely the future nurse for her social part, and to furnish her with the arms worthy of her profession, in the highest degree.

We conclude for our assertions touching the first point:

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