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EDITORIAL.

NEW LOOK IN BEATITUDES.

Alas, it is indeed sad, that in this world of suspicion, frustration and crises, when New Looks in dress, morals and manners predominate, that even the beatitudes have not escaped revision and one may now read "It is more blessed to get than to give." Almost as long ago as the date of the Sermon on the Mount (at least, in the minds of young people of to-day) the bad old days of nursing and nurses reigned tranquilly, and all that was then accomplished by sustained determination and tremendous human endeavour for the benefit of the sick and to the glory of our profession is now spurned and accounted as of no value.

Maybe the young people of to-day are not entirely to blame for their materialistic outlook, for they are blooming in a world made degenerate by greed and totalitarianism, and which is anæmic from the blood-letting of two world wars in which human rights and lives were held in contempt in many countries. Young aspirants to the nursing profession have also been deceived, and for this, the older nurses who practised the deception are now getting their deserts.

Twenty years ago, when a spade was called a spade, young women in training to become nurses, were called "Probationers." Which was exactly what they were. To be in probation meant that one was to undergo a special training with specialised education in order to fit oneself to enter a worthy profession. It also meant that unformed characters had to be chipped, moulded and refined, with all their spiky corners smoothly rounded off (which was not always a painless procedure) so that the trained product would be as near perfect as possible. The results obtained in those days—even the poorest—were quiet, dignified, knowledgeable and professional women, capable and anxious to serve the sick wherever they were to be found. Not so bad, one must admit.

Also twenty or more years ago young women of sound principles really believed that State Registration and a good profession were well worth three years' hard work and study, for being of good education and sound commonsense they knew that nothing of real value could be had without effort. I doubt if any of them would ever have presumed to have assessed their talents in the same category as those of our incomparable Miss Nightingale even in private, much less from a coal cart to a public audience in Hyde Park!

The parents of yesterday's nurses did not have to pay in round figures for the professional education of their daughters (apart from a mere £30 for fees for P.T.S. courses). They noted with quiet satisfaction

the generous recognition of the general public for their stumbling and untrained efforts, which revealed itself in large measures of gratitude, free expert education from specialists, free uniform, board and lodging, and free medical attention when ill, and a little pocket money—all of which would cost a fair amount in money. Perhaps we were a little too modest of our usefulness in those bygone days, for we were told repeatedly, day after day, from huge posters on the walls of our towns and villages that "unskilled hands were dangerous and a waste of National expenditure." Everybody was exhorted to become skilled and efficient in his or her trade, and thus enhance the country's prestige and save her precious money.

In the topsy-turviness amongst which we live to-day it seems that the unskilled, untrained and inefficient persons have the greater claim upon the public sympathy and purse! This state of affairs cannot and will not last, and then woe to the unskilled workers!

Owing to circumstances over which the young people to-day have no control, they find themselves much sought after, and in great demand as workers. Many glittering careers, once closed to them, are now thrown wide open, and thus the practical profession of nursing has lost many of its would-be probationers. In order to enhance "recruitment" and to add modern glamour to the ageless glory of nursing, the little deception of re-naming probationers "Student Nurses" became the vogue. Those responsible for this little ruse were smart enough not to interfere with the duties necessary for training, for, they argued, once the students were in the bag it was up to them to find out their little mistake! Probationers, accepted as such, knew more or less what would be expected of them, whereas "Student Nurses," recruited as such, had very different ideas. They did not expect to have to become proficient in the domestic duties which are inseparable from sickness; they expected to be treated purely as academic students, without having to pay or work for their privileges. Can you wonder that many recoiled and declined the honour with disdain? Now there are so few "Students" to fill the yawning gap that those who deign to do so, enter with an inflated idea of their own usefulness and importance, even before they have acquired any professional skill or knowledge. They thereupon make the most extravagant demands upon their fellow-countrymen, with every hope of them being highly successful. Did anyone mention "threats" or whisper "blackmail"?

What will these young, untrained persons, who are aspirants for State Registration, give to their stricken country in its most desperate and crucial hour, in return for £5 per week, plus free board, lodging and uniform,

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