


## PREFACE.

THESE few remarks to the British Red Cross Welbeck Women's Detachment are written by an old Nightingale Nurse. She knew and loved Miss Nightingale—was trained under that wonderful first matron of Nightingale Nurses, Mrs. Wardroper, and was privileged to help in the early days by doing some of the spade work which has made the lot of the modern nurse so much easier.

She sincerely hopes that nurses of the present day will be animated by the same spirit that was found in the pioneers, namely, the spirit of never shirking anything howsoever arduous, monotonous, or uninteresting—the spirit of absolute devotion to duty and enthusiasm for the highest ideals.





 ON the Red Cross Field Day in the summer at Welbeck, when I remarked that the "dressing" on a boy's leg was rather casually done, I overheard a nurse say : "Does it matter ? Everything is casual now-a-days, the individual is casual ; nothing is as thorough as it used to be."

I asked her if she was a trained nurse, and she said she was.

I thought then how woefully lacking she was in the spirit which should animate a nurse, and I felt that though she was correct in thinking people are careless and much less thorough than they used to be, life and death and all things belonging to sickness and nursing are



quite the same as years ago, and just as serious.

I felt I should like the Welbeck people joining in this good work of First Aid under the British Red Cross Society—some of whom I have known since their very childhood—to begin with a different idea and different aims, and the first thing I should like them to remember would be the great importance of the little tiny things, which seem so insignificant and yet mean so much.

A ruck in a sheet is a little thing, but it has caused bed-sores which have added very much to the discomfort and suffering of many a poor patient who has been left to the mercies of a careless nurse.

The mere fact of a nurse putting a lotion on some shelf with medicine bottles, intending to remove it to its proper place later, has been the cause

of the death of a patient, and a lifelong remorse to the nurse responsible for it.

What is lighter or more innocent than a flake of snow? Yet, the flakes falling and gathering together have been the means of covering villages, and killing the inhabitants.

When I was young I remember a fearful disaster occurring from a few drops of water oozing from a big dam, which had been observed but which it had not been thought worth while to report, resulting in the death of hundreds of people—a catastrophe which might have been avoided if the leakage had been repaired at the outset.

Such a thing as a fire left without a guard, carelessly, perhaps only for a moment, has caused the death of many a child.

I myself know of an instance where a cup of hot tea was left on the table with a child of three in the room, and that



child died in agonies nine days after from the effect of the scald it sustained in grasping the cup. A simple thing, but the results were far reaching.

Take for instance the importance of the temperature of a bath. A friend of mine scalded her own child. The nurse was out and she undertook to bath the child and put it to bed. The *hot* water had been put into the bath first by a maid, and not cooled. The mother plunged the child into the bath without taking the temperature of the water, and her child was scalded, and died from the shock sustained.

Another thing of great importance to remember is the keeping of hands and finger-nails absolutely clean. As Florence Nightingale once said: "No nurse who gets a festered or poisoned finger is fit to be a nurse."

Do not put pins in your dresses, but always carry a tiny pincushion attached to the dress. No nurse should make a

pincushion of herself. Queen Victoria had a favourite maid, who one day got a scratch in this way which resulted in her death.

All appliances should be kept scrupulously clean. It is better to do a thing a hundred times unnecessarily than to take any risk from neglecting it on one occasion.

People do not often die from injuries received in ordinary accidents, but may be crippled for life for want of a little careful and prompt attention at the right moment.

We must remember that a germ is a very small thing, but will cause an immensity of trouble if (by want of care) it is allowed to enter a wound.

Aim at making your patients comfortable; do not be bound by too much sealing wax or red tape. Of course you should be very punctilious in obeying all orders given by the Doctor, Nurse, or



Matron of the Detachment, but there are many little kindnesses which can be done without breaking rules, and many a poor lonely heart may be cheered by the nurse forgetting herself, or by imagining herself in the patient's place for a while.

You must forgive some of my remarks, and you will, I know, when I confess that even after 40 years' experience I am just beginning to realise how little I know, and how much more there is always to be learned.

We are not all able to do the same work, to attain to the same height in any profession, but the smallest thing done well, be it ever so tiny, is better than a great thing attempted and perhaps left unfinished or imperfectly performed.

I know how disheartened many of us get because our bandages do not go exactly as we would wish, when our fingers feel all thumbs. Though we try to be very gentle with the patient we seem so clumsy, but we should remem-

ber that in God's world, for those who are in *earnest*, there is no failure.

No work truly done—no word sympathetically spoken—no kind action freely given—has ever been in vain, be it ever so small.

In Nursing also let us remember that nothing is drudgery. That the smallest and most simple duty, even scrubbing a floor or cleaning a grate, done for the patient's good, is a noble work. As one of our great writers has said: "Drudgery is the grey angel of success."

Every noble work attempted has at first seemed impossible.

In Nursing we should endeavour as far as possible to carry a smiling face. We may be tired, disheartened; we may be found fault with, but smile—smile through all the ins and outs of life. Nothing is so cheering to the sick as to see a smiling, sympathetic face.

Never let your patients feel they are far off, or a bother; that you are anxious



to get done as quickly as possible ; but rather let them feel that nothing else is concerning you but their special welfare at that moment. Never try to hurry a sick person.

The little time you will have at your disposal for practice is so small that you may become disheartened that you are not doing greater things, or attaining to the perfection you had hoped for ; or you may find the lectures a little difficult to understand ; but, if you try, the real merit is not in the success but in the endeavour.

A nurse ought always to be courteous to her patients, as every patient (especially in accident cases) feels very much being laid aside and being helpless for the time being ; therefore, they will appreciate a courteous manner and a little sympathy far more than a greater talent and an overbearing and domineering way of doing the necessary duties.

The talent of success in Nursing is nothing more than doing what you are

told, and doing it well, without any thought of yourself or of fame.

There is an old saying that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing," but we should aim at using well the little knowledge we have by doing the little things asked for thoroughly, and not setting up as instructors to others until we have thoroughly mastered what we ought to know ourselves.

I understand that the Mansfield Hospital is shortly to become a recognised Training School for Nurses, so that any who feel, after this training, that they have a vocation in Nursing, may find opportunities to train there, and become fully fledged if they wish to do so.

Above all, the nurse should have a large heart, a thinking brain, and cultivate powers of observation ; to notice any change in the patient, any anxiety or distress, noting the same and reporting to her superior under whom she may be



working, especially the doctor. These remarks are made in the hope that most of you will profit by these meetings and try to be of use in your homes, and fit yourselves to act (in any emergency) until the doctor comes.

Then with regard to the lectures: even at the sacrifice of personal inclination, or anything which may suggest itself as attractive at the moment, for the sake of those who are anxious to keep the classes together, and those who are giving their time to come to teach or lecture, let everyone do their little best by being regular and punctual in attendance, and in aiming at perfection in their work, even though they may fall far short of it, for where there is wholehearted and earnest work, there is, in the end, no failure. And very often we learn more wisdom from our failures than from our successes.

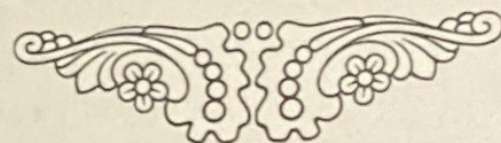
The keynote of Nursing is *absolute* obedience to orders and carefulness in

carrying out the smallest details with loyalty to all your superiors.

If you carry away some of these thoughts in your minds, your patients will live to bless you, and your homes will be better for the kindly help you have learned to render, and all who come into contact with you will have reason to bless these meetings, and will feel that the world is not, after all, such a casual place when there are such hard-working people in it as the members of this Red Cross Detachment at Welbeck.

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