

**Sick-nursing essentially a woman's mission : being the inaugural lecture on the qualifications for and the conduct of sick-nurses delivered at the opening of the new School of Nursing in Saint Bartholomew's Hospital on May 1, 1877 / by Dyce Duckworth.**

### **Contributors**

Duckworth, Sir Dyce, 1840-1928.  
Royal College of Surgeons of England

### **Publication/Creation**

London : Longmans, Green, 1877.

### **Persistent URL**

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# SICK-NURSING

## ESSENTIALLY A WOMAN'S MISSION

BEING THE  
INAUGURAL LECTURE ON THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR  
AND THE CONDUCT OF SICK-NURSES  
DELIVERED AT THE OPENING OF THE  
NEW SCHOOL OF NURSING IN SAINT BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL

*On May 1, 1877*

BY  
DYCE DUCKWORTH, M.D.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS  
EXAMINER IN THE PRACTICE OF PHYSIC IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH  
ASSISTANT-PHYSICIAN TO THE HOSPITAL



*(Published by desire of the Treasurer and Almoners of the Hospital)*

LONDON  
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.  
1877

LONDON : PRINTED BY  
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE  
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

TO  
SIR SYDNEY H. WATERLOW, BART., M.P.

TREASURER OF SAINT BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL, ETC.

THIS LECTURE IS INSCRIBED

IN RECOGNITION OF HIS EFFORTS IN PROMOTING THE NEW SCHOOL  
OF NURSING IN THE HOSPITAL, AND IN ADMIRATION OF  
HIS NUMEROUS PHILANTHROPIC LABOURS

BY  
THE AUTHOR

11 GRAFTON STREET, PICCADILLY

*May 1877*

# THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF HENRY THE SECOND

BY JOHN GILBERT FROTHINGHAM

LONDON: PUBLISHED BY J. B. LIPPINCOTT, 15, N. Y. ST.

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## SICK-NURSING.



PROBATIONARY NURSES OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL,  
—We are met together here for the first time to begin a course of systematic study, and in doing so we also inaugurate a new system of nursing within the walls of this hospital.

Some, if not many, amongst you may know that St. Bartholomew's Hospital is not only the largest, but probably by far the oldest and most venerable one in this country. A new system, therefore, which is introduced into the management of any department in it must have a peculiar interest not only for those who are connected with the hospital, but for all persons, and they are many, who exert themselves in the cause of the sick who, alas, are everywhere around us.

It is surely very curious for us to-day to look back—say some four hundred years—into the history of this old foundation, and to consider that in place of the elaborate working-staff of all ranks which now exists here for the relief of suffering, there were on this very spot of ground some few devoted canons or monks of the Augustinian Order<sup>1</sup> who, clad in their black and

<sup>1</sup> Hospitals were generally founded according to the Augustinian Order, and were situated by a roadside to receive pilgrims and poor travellers. The Canons wore a white tunic with a linen gown under a black cloak, and a hood covering the head, neck, and shoulders.



cowled cloaks, with shaven heads and sandalled feet, sped on their rounds of charity, and ministered, each physician and nurse in one, to the needs of the sick and poor they took in to their priory-hospital.<sup>1</sup>

It is not unseemly for us to-day to commemorate the deeds of those simple and pious men who, according to their light, exemplified the best features of the Christianity of their day, though, sad to relate, it is known that these monks, in common with many other of their confraternities, began in course of time to neglect their duties, lead self-indulgent lives, and thus to bring about their final ejection.<sup>2</sup>

I have not been able to discover exactly at what period nurses of your, the gentler, sex were introduced here, but it is certain that when Henry VIII. transferred

<sup>1</sup> 'St. Bartholomew's Hospital was founded between the years 1123 and 1133 by Rahere, the jester or minstrel of King Henry I., who, becoming serious, obtained of that king a grant of a void space of ground in the west suburbs of London, called Smithfield, whereupon he built a priory, and on the south side thereof he also built a hospital for a master, brethren, and sisters, and for poor diseased persons till they got well, for women with child until delivered, and for the maintenance of the children born there, until the age of seven, if their mothers died in the hospital.'—*Memoranda, references, and documents relating to the Royal Hospitals of the City of London*, prepared and printed by a Committee of the Court of Common Council, p. i. : London, 1863. At the time of the dissolution of the monasteries there were a prior and twelve canons of the Augustine Order in residence at Saint Bartholomew's, and they received pensions. Vide *British Monachism*, Fosbrooke, edit. 3, 1843; and Dugdale's *Monasticon*.

<sup>2</sup> In the petition of the mayor and aldermen of this city to King Henry VIII., in 1538, requesting that the three 'Spytells' should be made over to their care, and which was granted, it is stated that the 'preestes, canons, and monks' appropriated the large revenues to their 'owne synguler proffyt, lucre, and commodytie onely,' and lived in disregard of the poor sick around them.—*Op. cit.*, p. 84.



this with the other royal hospitals to the care of the mayor, aldermen, and commonalty of the city in 1546, the new governing body bound themselves to establish upon the staff within three months' time 'a matron and twelve women under her to make the beds and wash and attend on' the inmates, who were then limited to one hundred in number. The matron was to receive £2 6s. 8d., and each of the twelve women forty shillings yearly.

The archives of the hospital afford plain evidence that this nursing staff was at work in 1547, and that it was regularly disciplined.

In 1557 separate charges were drawn up for the matron and for the nurses and keepers of the wards ; and of these it may be said that so excellent and comprehensive were they that they might very fairly be employed to this day. Indeed, some of the points insisted upon are enforced at the present time.

From that period the record of devoted and unselfish service rendered here, could we but gather it, would fill a volume.

We can never know even a little of all that should be told about this ; but I can tell you something of the lives and characteristics of a few of the best sisters or nurses who have served this old foundation within the memory of its present officers.

The arrangements under which they worked are about to be changed ; and in closing this chapter of the hospital history it will be but fair to the memory



of these good women, and not unprofitable instruction for you, to record very briefly some of their qualities, and to discover the reasons of their success.

Miss Nightingale, whose name and career naturally recur to our minds to-day, exciting in us now, as always, feelings of deep admiration, has declared that 'the perfection of surgical nursing may be seen practised by the old-fashioned Sisters of a London hospital as it can be seen nowhere in Europe.'<sup>1</sup> This is surely very high testimony from a critical quarter. Let us see how it has been won within these walls, not only by surgical but also by medical Sisters, for there have not been wanting here types of the best of both.

I naturally will not say anything about those who are working with us at the present time; but I may refer to the services of some of those who have laboured here during the past thirty or forty years, and who have retired from us, most of them, I think, to their long home.

Perhaps none of these is better remembered than one 'Sister Hope,' who was connected with St. Bartholomew's for many years. She came here originally as a patient after sustaining an accident, and suffered amputation of one of her legs. On recovery she became a nurse and at last a Sister. She acted under Dr. Hue. It is told of her that she did her work with untiring zeal and faithfulness. After forty years' service she retired on full pay. She was one of the last Sisters

<sup>1</sup> *Notes on Nursing.* Harrison: Pall Mall, 1860.



who wore a rail, and she was buried in one of these garments. These rails, or night-rails as they were termed, were white mantles or cloaks made of fine linen, and were provided by the hospital as part of the Sisters' uniform dress. They were worn in church, and on other occasions, as distinguishing marks of Sisters, and were supplied until 1841. In that year I find no more rails were issued, and one 'Sister Lucas' got a sum of money in lieu of a rail.

Next I should mention 'Sister Abernethy'—'Abernethy' of the days of Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Stanley. No surgical Sister was perhaps worthier than she, or better known by Bartholomew's men for her strong masculine sense and discretion. She was the last of the old school of Sisters, and her days are not yet ended.

A more recent 'Sister Abernethy' deserves notice, and she also is alive, and with her predecessor may yet know that their excellent qualities are still remembered here, and have been commended to you, their successors, to-day.

If you go into the church hard by, and look upon the western wall, you will find there a marble tablet which was erected to the memory of Mary Owen who was 'Sister Rahere' in Mr. Lawrence's time, and the inscription on it tells of her service here for thirty-nine years as nurse and Sister, and further sets forth how she bequeathed no less a sum than £250 out of her savings to the Samaritan Fund of this hospital. She died in



1848. Her admirable qualities and correct judgment are not yet forgotten here.

Amongst the older Sisters should also be mentioned 'Sister Colston' of Mr. Vincent's and Mr. Lloyd's day, a woman remarkable for her good sense and clear head. Nor can I omit to tell you of 'Sisters Matthew and Hope' of Sir George Burrows' time, and of my own student days, or of the faithful old nurse Flack of Matthew ward, who have all passed away to their rest, having done good work and soothed many a sufferer; or yet again of 'Sister Elizabeth' of Dr. Jeaffreson's day, one so devoted and so womanly, of whom Dr. Jeaffreson himself once expressed to me the following sentence—'I have only to say to Sister Elizabeth, "That case is a bad one," and she will never hold her hands day or night to save it if possible.'

From examples such as these you may learn the secret, if indeed it be a secret, of success in your calling. The tale of the excellences of these good women is the same in each case, and it tells chiefly of faithfulness and devotion, and of the exercise of good sense and correct judgment. These Sisters were the best types of the nurses of their day, they learned all they knew within these walls, and they were the right hands of the medical and surgical officers they acted under. They gained responsibility because they were worthy of it, they were excellent in their calling because they had mastered carefully all the details of it, and had acquired good administrative capacity.



And the same must be the case with each one of you if you would follow in their steps, and would succeed either as hospital or private nurses. You too must begin at the beginning and not, even at this lapse of time, where they left off. There is no royal road to learning anything. Knowledge and fitness only come by hard work and faithful service. I state this by way of caution, for there seems to be a tendency at the present time for young learners to think that they start from a more advanced point than their predecessors did, and may thus make, as it were, a short cut to excellence. Be not deceived : this is not, and never will be, the case.

You may, it is true, possess better education and more culture than some of those whose excellences as nurses I have just described ; but you must learn your art, just as they learned theirs, by simple and laborious attention to details.

Surely, after directing your attention to such nursing-sisters as this hospital has produced, it can hardly be necessary for me to urge a plea in favour of a system of nursing by women.

This has always seemed to me to be so natural that I have often advised young women with fitting qualifications, and who seek an active sphere of usefulness, to adopt nursing as a profession, and I have offered this advice without violent prejudice to the adoption of the medical art proper by women. I am, however, free to confess that on this latter point I have but small



sympathy, believing, as I do, that this country, at all events, presents no sphere or demand for such services at the hands of your sex.<sup>1</sup> But so exactly is sick-nursing a field for female energy, that I regret to find cultivated women expending their powers in a wrong direction, and robbing the ranks of skilled nursing-sisters to form a band of imperfectly trained medical practitioners.

My views on this matter are exactly expressed in the following sentence, which was uttered more than twenty years ago by the late Professor Maurice when addressing a ladies' class: he said, 'The more pains we take to call forth and employ the faculties which belong characteristically to each sex, the less will it be intruding upon the province which, not the conventions of the world, but the will of God, has assigned to the other.'<sup>2</sup>

It seems very plain, I think, that women are intended to do woman's work in this world, and not men's work. Each is supreme in his and her own sphere. Instinct, if nothing else, would teach this.

Again, the same distinguished theologian remarked further: 'It is the rule, and not the exception, that a woman should have the faculty for nursing whether developed or not; there is no more striking instance of a providential distinction in offices.'<sup>3</sup> Professor Maurice knew something of hospital life and sick-nursing, for he was for ten years chaplain to Guy's Hospital.

<sup>1</sup> In India and in many parts of the East, I believe, lady medical practitioners may find a large field of usefulness.

<sup>2</sup> 'Practical Lectures to Ladies.' Macmillan: 1855.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 15.



Believing then, as I do, that you are satisfied with the sphere of work you have voluntarily chosen, permit me now to welcome you here, and to wish you, in the name of all the hospital authorities and officers, God-speed in your efforts.

It has been truly remarked that nurses, like poets, 'are born, not made.' This means that some women are more naturally fitted to be nurses than others. Feminine and maternal instincts vary in women. But we lately saw that it was the rule for most women to possess this fitness or faculty, although it was more pronounced in some than others. Hence it may fairly be believed that the instinct is capable of being aroused and cultivated in the majority of your sex.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that men have often made, and do make, good nurses in default of women, and this is especially true of soldiers and sailors. This is because the latter are trained to habits of discipline and obedience, and the fact belies the common assertion as to the hard-heartedness of men brought up in such rough schools. The rule is, however, that nursing is distasteful to men, who naturally yield to the gentler sex the more tender and delicate ministrations required by the sick.

<sup>1</sup> 'We assume that, because God has bestowed a talent, it does not need cultivation; that it may be left to chance; that it is sure to come forth, and to exercise itself in a reasonable manner whenever there is occasion for it. I believe women are doing the greatest injustice to one of the treasures of which God has made them stewards when they say so. The born painter and musician is the one who takes most pains to cherish the powers which he finds latent in him; the most thoroughly born nurse will, I conceive, watch her endowment with the same care.' *Op. cit.*, p. 15.



This leads me to consider the proper subject of this my first systematic lecture to you ; namely, the qualifications for, and the conduct of, sick-nurses.

I mentioned just now that the success of men-nurses in the persons of soldiers and sailors was mainly due to their habits of discipline and obedience. You will have to acquire these habits, and will have to learn, if you do not at present understand, the fact that no success can follow your best efforts amongst the sick unless they are made in a spirit of strict obedience and according to method. The sooner a probationer acquires this part of her training the better. The whole art of nursing is based essentially upon discipline for its foundation. To most of you this is the beginning of your real education as nurses, and the key-notes of this lecture which I wish to leave ringing in your ears throughout your whole training here are these three—discipline, obedience, faithfulness.

To-morrow you will be severally told off to your wards for duty under the supervision and guidance of your teachers and superiors.

Your first business will be to work carefully and carry out to the letter whatever orders are given to you. You may find the particular service allotted to you perhaps irksome or even menial, and you will probably not at first understand the reasons for many things that you will be asked to do. Your duty nevertheless will be to go to work and do simply what you are bidden.



In time you will know the reasons for your orders. Little will be left at first to your own judgment. You will use your so-called common sense, that subtle combination of faculties which indeed is so often appealed to, but so seldom in happy co-ordination for response, your more special senses, your eyes, your ears, aye and your noses too, and will of course form your own opinions upon matters.

If you have difficulties and require information, you will have every explanation afforded to you, and be carefully taught. It will be my duty and that of my colleague, Mr. Willett, to assist you to the utmost. But you will look to your immediate superiors—I mean the Sister of the Ward and the Matron of the Hospital—for guidance and advice in the first instance. You are to know that they have reached their positions of responsibility after years of training, having acquired a large acquaintance with the routine of the wards and the management of the sick. I charge you always to respect the Sister and look up to her, to second and support her efforts, and to maintain the discipline of your wards. You may think sometimes that you know better than the Sister, but it will in no case be your business to do otherwise than you are bidden.

If anything goes wrong, the fault will not then be yours. As an encouragement to you to work in this spirit, I may repeat to you an old saying to the effect that 'they who serve best will afterwards rule best.' This signifies for you that those who learn well all the



details of their work in a becoming spirit of deference to their superiors, will in due time be most likely to secure advancement and higher responsibilities.

Let me now give you two or three illustrations of the harm that may follow from a want of strict attention to orders in matters that might seem to you at first unimportant.

Take the case of a patient suffering from typhoid fever committed to your care. One of the leading symptoms of this illness is looseness of the bowels. You will be instructed in such a case that the patient is on no account to be allowed to go to the closet; that the bedpan is to be used on every occasion; and further, that every discharge from the bowels is to be carefully disinfected with carbolic acid before it is thrown away. Possibly you might not see the reasons for these precautions; they all entail some trouble; but they must not be omitted. Suppose you, in a spirit of carelessness, or in disobedience to orders, neglected to prevent the patient from leaving his bed, as he might wish to do, perhaps, in a half-delirious condition, and you allowed him to find his way to the closet, and he died there, as he possibly might, from a sudden faint, or from severe bleeding from the bowels,—the consequence of your incomppliance with orders would surely be very grievous. Again, suppose you neglected to disinfect each of the poisonous motions passed by such a patient before you threw them away, or saved them for inspection by the medical staff, and you thus permitted these pestilent



discharges to contaminate the air of the closets as well as the drainage-system of the hospital and neighbourhood, conceive what mischief you would be guilty of by disobedience and careless conduct.

Once more: you will be instructed to see that the friends of patients smuggle in to them no food. You will want much vigilance here, but remember that by exercising it you may both shorten illnesses and even save life. I have certainly witnessed several deaths due to smuggled food, and known diseases to be badly aggravated from this cause. You will have to support the Sister in checking such risks.

Thus, you see, it will be your duty to overlook no detail in carrying out your orders. Terrible results may follow the breach of a simple instruction, and ignorance or indifference on your part may cause much suffering and disaster.

Now you would all doubtless say that anyone who could thus neglect her duty was distinctly unfit to be a nurse, and you would be right in your opinion, for the failure and inaptitude would result from a spirit of self-confidence due to ignorance, or from a habit of mind to which discipline and obedience were uncongenial.

In your training here you will be required to observe very closely all that may be noticed about the patients in your charge, and you will have to write down for your teachers certain information each day. This habit will prove very useful to you, and will tend to



make you careful and exact in your work. It will train your memory and prevent you from giving wrong reports to the Sister and medical officers.

Reflect for a moment how important this part of your duty will be. You are beside the patients for hours together, the doctor is only present for a short time, and he is therefore entirely dependent on you for knowledge of many things. If you are careless, inobservant, or, worse still, if you give him wrong information, construct a romance out of your head, or, in plainer English, tell him untruths to cover your inattention and inefficiency, the consequences may be serious to the poor patient, and you fail to educate yourself for your calling.

Hence a nurse must be observant, and she must be truthful. Do not be ashamed to confess your ignorance, and above all do not cloak your neglect with a lie. Tell the plain truth, your mistakes will then be corrected, and you will gain increased respect on all sides.

It has been said that no one can become a good doctor who has not himself been ill, and I think it is quite as true that no one can be really an efficient nurse who has not at some time been ill or in need of nursing. It is at all events certain that if you can put yourself, in imagination, in the patient's place, you will do your work with more fitness and care than you otherwise would. This should teach you the lessons of tenderness and sympathy, and no one can nurse well who is deficient in these qualities.



Your influence in these respects will work great good. It may be that your manner and conduct may prove the best and sweetest thing ever known in the lifetime of some poor inmate here, and may tend to change the whole manner of that individual for the rest of his days. Suppose that instead of this you manifest roughness and lack sympathy, that you irritate where you should soothe a sick one, how great would such unkindness be, and what bitter memories of the past you would be piling up for the future!

You think this unlikely to happen, perhaps. Be not too sure or too self-confident. Your work will often try you, you will sometimes have to labour and watch when you would fain take rest, and you will need all your self-control and your best nature. You will indeed have to learn to possess your souls in patience, for your best efforts will not always command appreciation, you will not always find approval for doing your plain duty, yet you must believe in your heart, and you will truly find it to be the case, that virtue in nursing is its own reward.

Be encouraged to be always doing your best. You should learn at once to do only one kind of work here, and that your best.

I lay much stress on the qualifications of good temper and patience in a nurse. A bad-tempered and impatient sick-nurse is an abomination, and faults of this nature will in no case be overlooked here. You could never become good nurses in spite of such failings



as these. I implore you to be warned and forearmed against these infirmities.

Cheerfulness and brightness of manner in the performance of your duties will make all happy around you, and prove of wonderful avail to the sick. I do not mean that you are to be frivolous or to display levity in your conduct, for you must be above such a tone as this, and be sober-minded at all times, but I speak of a cheerful spirit, and of such qualities as will encourage hopefulness amongst the patients you minister to.

You will be trained to habits of punctuality, for no hospital and no illnesses can be properly managed in default of these. As in respect of habits of order and tidiness, which are also imperative in your departments, there is a place for everything in the ward, and everything should be at hand in its place, fit for instant use ; so too there is a time for each duty, and each thing must be done at the right time.

You will therefore be careful to attend to the hours fixed for the different duties of your ward.

Although the arrangements will permit of your completing all you have to do, and still leave you some time for your own disposal, you will find that in hospital routine to-day's work can very rarely be left undone till to-morrow.

We shall not show leniency here to probationers who prove either untidy or unpunctual, and such aspirants must either speedily amend their bad habits, or seek another sphere for their irregular efforts.



So too with respect to cleanliness. No recovery from sickness can be speedy or thorough where there is dirt. In your persons and dress we expect you to be always clean, and presentable, and that not merely on the outside. You will command no respect if you are slovenly in appearance, you could not indeed respect yourselves. A person's habits may generally well be known from his exterior. Happily for you, your neat probationer's uniform, which we bid you wear here always, leaves you no personal vanity to gratify, you can therefore let your adornment be only that most pleasing one of all, perfect cleanliness and tidiness; and while upon this part of my subject let me commend to your study Miss Nightingale's and Miss Lees' remarks on the unfitness of such things in the dress of a sick-nurse as high-heeled shoes, crinolines, chignons and cushions for the hair.<sup>1</sup>

I urge you further to have a keen eye for impurity everywhere. The dirtiness of London atmosphere has, at all events, the advantage of stimulating those who will be clean to unceasing efforts in doing battle with it, and it may be that much of our national pre-eminence in hospital and household cleanliness is due to constant strife with effects resulting from our often unkind climate. In my next lecture I shall explain to you the nature of dust and show you what mischief it may breed. To-day I only allude to

<sup>1</sup> *Handbook for Hospital Sisters*, by Florence S. Lees. Isbister & Co. : 1874.



the necessity of your quickening all your senses to discover uncleanness, and I bid you to cast it out everywhere and always. If not clean yourselves, you will not keep your patients clean, you will possibly spread disease and often retard recovery. You will be trained to look upon dirt and dust as some of your and your patients' worst enemies. If, for example, you discover some foul odour, your duty will be not to rest till you follow it to its source, and remove the cause ; failing to do this, you will report the matter at once to your superior. Your senses will be educated to recognise a pure atmosphere in your ward, and you will be taught how to secure ventilation without setting up draughts of air. You can never be too zealous in striving after a high standard of cleanliness and purity, and happily the arrangements of this hospital will enable you to promote this to the utmost.

A good nurse does her work smartly and neatly. By this I do not mean that hurry and noise are desirable. Nothing could be worse. We wish you to learn the habit of despatching your duties promptly and with precision, avoiding the faults of fussiness on the one hand, and dawdling on the other.

And I trust that you will each acquire the art of speaking plainly with firm womanly voices, and that you will move about quietly, not speaking in whispers, and not gliding about on tiptoe, both of which are aggravating to, and bad for, sick people.

I have now spoken of nearly all the necessary



qualifications for sick-nurses. Two other points remain, and but few words will suffice for allusion to them. They touch upon moral character.

I told you of the absolute necessity of truthfulness in a nurse, and it is of equal importance she should also be honest and sober.

It cannot be denied that some women take to nursing merely to gain a living, or to eke out provision for themselves and others, having no real call to their work, no love for it for its own sake, and no natural capacity for it.

We hope to attract around us here only such women as will work with us from the love of nursing, and who are really inspired by high motives. Many years ago it was commoner far than now to meet with dishonest and drunken nurses. Merely to think of such conduct in a person professing to take care of the sick and helpless makes one sad. Such wretched women are of course unfit for any responsibility, much more for such noble service as care of the afflicted ones of humanity, and they soon meet their doom in dismissal and degradation.

In a well-managed hospital such as this, habits of dishonesty and intemperance are at once detected, and so I have little need to dwell further on these vices; but my duty compels me to sketch this ugly outline for you, and to point out to you, on the threshold of your initiation here, all the special temptations of your new calling by way of warning.

Many eyes will be directed upon you. You will



really always do your work in public, your good and your bad qualities will all be scrutinised and known. The recollection of this should prove a wholesome stimulus to you to attain the highest excellence and character for yourselves.

Your work, though often trying and sometimes harder than at others, will not press so heavily upon those of you who are physically fit to be nurses but that you may retain your vigour of mind and body ; and we urge you to keep in the best possible health for your own sakes and that you may do your duty properly.

You will have suitable exercise and diversion, and your dietary will be full and wholesome.

I recommend to none of you habits of teetotalism, which for the community at large I also discountenance, though if any you be already total abstainers from the stronger liquors, I say by all means follow out your principles if they agree with you ; yet for the unpledged amongst you—the majority, I surmise—I give you this piece of advice, and implore you to follow it out to the letter—*take these drinks only with your meals, and never by themselves at any other times.*

That, I believe, to be also the law for the community at large, and the practice of it, and not teetotalism, constitutes the first step towards the redemption of our so-called Christian England from its greatest curse—that of intemperance in strong drinks.

On occasions of special need you will resort to the proper support to be had from tea, cocoa, or other food.



You will, alas, see only too many sad results of intemperance in our wards, and your good influence with the unhappy victims of it may prove very useful if you employ them rightly.

Let me impress upon you the fact that a large measure of your usefulness and success as nurses will depend upon the spirit in which you do your work. Never forget that the patients you nurse are of the first importance, and that their welfare is before everything else. You have to labour that disease may be subdued, and that the sick may, if possible, recover.

You will spare no pains to secure these results. No trouble will be too great for you—nothing in the way of duty can be a trouble; you will be willing to spend and be spent in faithful service; you will cheerfully and hopefully do all that in you lies to promote the good of the sick; and you will forget yourselves and not think that you are unfairly taxed. If you work in this spirit, success cannot fail to attend your efforts, you will do vast good, and you will develop into valuable nurses; but all this will be denied to the careless and proud who cannot forget themselves while they minister to others.

We who have been much amongst sickness, and with hospital patients, are not unmindful that possibly some of you may feel nervous and shocked at first when brought into contact with you fellow-creatures maimed, mutilated, and rendered loathsome by accident, foulness, and by disease, or when exposed at any



moment to scenes which in themselves are truly horrible and revolting; but on the contrary we shall all have sympathy with you, and we know well that you will soon find that the claims of duty, and the doing of your share of helpful ministration will in a short time support you fully amidst all such trials, and that you will rapidly acquire all the necessary calmness and firmness without losing a particle of your gentle womanliness, or blunting the edge of your keenest susceptibilities. The discipline around you, and the calmness of your veteran superiors, will reassure and nerve you. Be not thus dismayed.

Again, when you have become accustomed to the routine of this place, let no familiarity with your work beget in you an officious or supercilious manner. You will not, if you are wise, forget your place for a moment, or venture, for example, to express your opinion, whatever it may be worth, upon the patients or their ailments either to them or to their friends, even if it be sought. This will never be your business. You will find that many sick people, especially men, are easily frightened, and you may unintentionally do much harm unless you keep your counsel to yourselves, and cheer or encourage the sick you wait upon.

Sometimes, no doubt, you will find a measure of drudgery in your work. If so, rest assured that this is inseparable from the task of acquiring knowledge and perfection in any art. Yet this very drudgery is



not an unwholesome thing in itself, it is a discipline ; and truly, if there are any people in the world to be sorry for more than others, they are, in my thinking, those who live under conditions where no discipline prevails.

However much or little of monotonous work may come to your several lots, you will find that each day brings with it in this place a never-ceasing variety of interests and novelties.

The inner life of a large metropolitan hospital is a perpetually unfolding drama ; and I venture to assert, from prolonged residence in three of such institutions, that the life therein is at once one of the most engrossing and fascinating that it falls to the lot of our common humanity to enjoy. For is not every side of life disclosed there, and do not the follies and the vices, the frailties and shams, of our fellow-creatures meet us side by side with the self-control, endurance, and heroism—not seldom, thank God—exhibited amongst the very poor and lowly in our midst?

You are, therefore, to be congratulated upon the field you have elected to labour in.

Often will it fall to some of you to do silent and unsought service to poor sufferers ; and if you have the hearts of true women, you may now and then find, outside the bare limits of your duty, opportunities for little ministrations of comfort and assistance which will suggest themselves as you gain knowledge of your sphere of work and of human character.



It is notorious that some of the best sick-nursing is done by trained Sisters of the Roman communion. I have observed their work in many parts of the world, and have now in my mind a Prussian hospital which is entirely conducted by these good women, and which for order, brightness, and cleanliness could hardly be anywhere surpassed.<sup>1</sup> The excellences of these Roman nursing-sisters flow from the motives which impel them to their calling. It is a matter of religion with them. In many cases their training is defective, and, by the side of modern teaching, their practice is effete. This is not their fault, but the fact remains that the spirit and the will to do good work pervade these women. Shall it be said that in England a spirit of religion is wanting to inspire our nursing systems, and that we of this nineteenth century wait for the return of priestly wisdom, and a subordination to devices of man's making for the quickening of Christian principle? No; for truly such wisdom as this 'descendeth not from above, but is earthly,' and may be even worse. No, I repeat; the plain truth is that *all* our duties must be guided by religion, in a spirit which no communion can rightly arrogate as its own, and by the sole motives arising out of our common Christianity. Englishmen, and English women too, must in no degree fall short of the highest standard here.

Your real worth and fitness for your calling will be recognised not only by what you do, but by the

<sup>1</sup> The hospital Mariahilf, near Aix-la-Chapelle.



manner of your work. Your character and motives can no more fail to show themselves in your hourly work than your shadow can fail to be seen in sunlight. Your religion must be the habit of each moment of your life, and not the profession of your belief, not mere recital of prayers or hearing sermons, but labour of that kind which constitutes perpetual prayer and praise.

And is it not the prerogative of your sex so to minister? What said one of Scotland's greatest poets?

O Woman ! in our hours of ease  
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,  
And variable as the shade  
By the light quivering aspen made;  
When pain and anguish wring the brow,  
A ministering angel thou !<sup>1</sup>

I may tell you that we are all ambitious to raise this new School of Nursing which we open to-day to the highest pitch of excellence and efficiency. We want you to be worthy of the efforts which the indefatigable Treasurer and the generous Governors of this hospital are making with this end in view ; and another reason which must operate powerfully upon us, teachers and learners alike, is this, that we possess here a very proud motto, which, although it be unwritten, influences all in the service of this place, and it is—*nulli secundus*. We do not know what it is to take the second place in anything we put our hands to.

<sup>1</sup> 'Marmion,' canto vi.—*Sir Walter Scott*. 1830.



The necessity for well-trained and skilful nurses increases every day both for public and private wants. Those of you who remain with us, or those who may seek their fortunes as private nurses, will all alike find fields for labour.

A greater need may indeed come upon us nationally, and sooner perhaps than some of us may think, though God forbid, for who shall say that the present disturbances in the East of Europe may not drag England into a righteous war, with all its attendant horrors, when, alas, we may wish to equip many such nurses as we hope you may become for active service on distant shores?

Go forward, then, to begin your new duties. You will be helped if you help yourselves; and, in such a mission as you have chosen, who can doubt but that the God of our fathers, aye, and the God of our mothers too, will be with you to sustain, comfort, and to bless you?

## APPENDIX.

IN CONNECTION with the opening of the new School of Nursing at St. Bartholomew's, it is interesting to me to learn, as I have done since this lecture went to press, that the first school of the kind in France was inaugurated last month in Paris.

Under the name of *L'Ecole de Garde-Malades et d'Ambulancières*, and under the auspices of *La Société de Médecine Pratique de Paris*, a most excellent theoretical Nursing-school has been started.

The Director of the School, *M. le Docteur Duchaussoy*, has, during a recent visit to Paris, very kindly given me a full account of the project. It has been found impossible at present to give instruction in hospitals, and therefore the teaching, although as demonstrative as possible, is mainly theoretical. Lectures are given three evenings in the week, in the *Mairie* of the sixth *arrondissement*, gratuitously. A staff of 21 lecturers has been appointed. Oral examinations are held after each lecture. At the end of the course, which will last five months, a diploma will be granted to the candidates after full examination. It is hoped that practical hospital instruction may soon be secured for the young nurses. There are now 120 pupils in the school. The scheme has been very carefully worked out, and, in the hands of a large and energetic body of eminent teachers, it cannot fail to prove a valuable institution for the country. In an excellent inaugural lecture, which has been published, *Dr. Duchaussoy* remarked that the religious sisterhoods in France furnished both an inadequate supply, and a very unsatisfactory class, of nurses.



LONDON: PRINTED BY  
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE  
AND PARLIAMENT STREET





