

AN image is a statue, form and semblance, the verbal meaning being to reflect. As we go about our daily work we go on projecting our reflections on the screen of the society and thus create our own image in the public eyes. In order to draw a correct assessment of ourselves we must be able to see our own image through the eyes of the public.

First, let us consider our image in the public eyes today. Where are we? What is our standing? And how to perfect our image? Let us try and find answers to these questions so that we may continue to be partners in the ministry of healing, serving to promote the health of the nation.

A Bread-winner

Modern demands of life render us as members of just another profession yearning for a living. As any other member of the community, the nurse is burdened by family responsibilities. Even as a student nurse she is not spared from family obligations. No sooner a nurse starts to earn a salary than she is surrounded by the demands from her parents, brothers and sisters. But at the same time these difficulties should not preclude the nurse from rendering her best and devoted service to fulfil her responsibilities to the community. If nurses join hands and render team service regardless of the various grades, professional qualifications or experience they possess, there will not be any room for criticism that the nurse is failing in her duties. Hours of work could be regulated through suitable shift systems to avoid distractions towards home responsibilities and frustration thereby.

Weak Leadership

We must admit the weakness in our leadership at various levels. Complacency, fear of exposure and self-indulgence are the main stumbling blocks in our efforts to promote effective leadership. We lack the initiative to avail of the authority and power for creative purposes. No wonder, we are not able to fulfil the physical, social and spiritual needs of the young nurses, teach and guide them to main-

The Nurse and the Community

The Public Image of the Nurse

tain moral codes of ethics. We need dynamic leadership, courage of conviction and wisdom for maintaining efficient nursing services. Unity and solidarity among us are lacking in our efforts for proper representation and reformation.

The general impression is that we are not well-versed, well-read and fully conversant with national and social affairs, sports etc. although advanced nursing education offers an overall development. Are we timid and shy? As members of the community we must be familiar with general and public affairs of the country without involving ourselves in politics. But how many of us do read the daily newspapers, or other publications for current knowledge? As we

pect. Our rights in the society should balance with our responsibilities to the community. Let us check to see whether we render ourselves cheap by impetuously yielding to unwholesome temptations, thus exposing ourselves to low estimation.

Practical Mother

Our picture in the society is not as gloomy as we often imagine. Nurses are the practical mothers and approved housewives. They are the leaders and initiators of community health programmes. And that is how they are in great demand for marriages these days.

Nurses are praiseworthy images of messengers of health. People look up to the nurses as their educators, counsellors and examples of health in the community. Good quality nursing is always appreciated and recognised by the society.

Having attempted to look at us through the eyes of the public let us consider what a nurse ought to be in the community.

Efficiency and Effectiveness

The true image of a nurse is judged by the quality of nursing care she is able to impart. Efficient nursing is not merely the mastery of nursing techniques, the possession of certain skills or the attainment of mechanical and technical qualifications. It means nursing the whole patient, with love and tenderness, with sympathy and understanding. It means restoration of health with patience, kindness and humility and identifying herself with the community. As a member of the community the nurse should express these by example and precept. Very often in practice we are anything but what we have learned to be.

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advance in our nursing education system, let us widen our dimensions of professional and general knowledge and live as worthy citizens. In our ambitions to advance let us aim at some worthy contribution to the society and the country at large.

Free Lance

The nature of our service brings us in contact with a wide range of people in public life. The opportunities to cater for their needs irrespective of race, creed, caste and sex tend to develop in us attitudes of undue freedom of movement. We are often misunderstood and many misconceptions and prejudices are formed among the people. As free citizens we have the right to enjoy our liberties, yet let us be conscious of maintaining our dignity and self-res-