

I am a nurse-teacher and quite young in the profession of teaching. The decision to become a teacher was taken long ago, whilst still a young adolescent, though I did not decide upon the medium for teaching until I was nineteen years old.

It was then that I made my first major decision in life to become a nurse and live as enriching and dynamic a life as I was capable of. The reasons for this decision I shall examine later in the article. From my childhood days I had been afforded every opportunity for a liberal education in the humanities. There was a surging enthusiasm in me to be of service to society.

I have always believed in and wanted to achieve two things. First, to develop myself, to attempt self-integration and self-realisation and, second, to be able to associate myself meaningfully and constructively in society. The first desire was born of the second. "Nothing is so dull, dreary and arid as to remain enclosed in oneself and nothing so exhilarating as to have attention and energy focussed outwards. It was clear quite early that self-realisation had to be in the context of one's friends, family and fellow creatures, and not in solitude.

To become a teacher, a good one, was an attempt to lead the good life. I believed that "All that fosters and encourages life is good, and all that destroys and mutilates it is evil." The teacher is in a key position in discharging this function of encouraging and fostering new life, of developing in her charges attitudes which will lead them to work for the common good. She is the most dynamic instrument in education. The student imbibes not merely data or the faculty of reasoning and analysis, but, more significantly, subtly, unconsciously and continuously becomes impregnated with ideals and ethics, with a code of living, from the stand taken by the teacher.

A total ignorance of science in a world that was increasingly being controlled by machines, worried me. Science, concerned with knowing and mastering nature, appeared remotely connected with human values. Yet its contribution towards the progress and welfare

of all peoples was real, undeniable. It was necessary to adapt the scientific method of inquiry,—its passionate concern with truth and its rejection of what is not empirically demonstrable—to human affairs. Through science, man had unveiled the secrets of the universe on a magnificent scale. He had not however managed to unfold the lineaments of his own self. Science and its achievements were valid so long as it was geared to the service of man, the promotion of happiness and peace.

In Nursing I found an answer to integrating science with the humanities. It afforded an opportunity for applying both to the service of the sick in body and mind, through a combination of factual information and broad human sympathy, imagination and understanding.

Ethics was concerned broadly with the problem of how to behave towards ourselves and to others. Ethics asserted the necessity of action—it sprang in fact from the need to act; and to act for good.

I required something more immediate and tangible than ivory-tower speculations. I needed to act, and affirm my relationship with the world. The influence of Albert Schweitzer at this juncture was profound, and helped to resolve the crisis. The philosophical notion of "reverence—for life" was personally valid. It enjoined that though we can never penetrate "the infinite and the inscrutable Will which is at the basis of existence, we can remain in touch with that Will by submitting ourselves to the mystery of life and devoting ourselves to all living creatures whom we have the opportunity and ability to serve."

Schweitzer's message was like a

I CHOOSE NURSING

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beacon which I unfalteringly followed. I readily gave up the purely intellectual pursuits to engage in what I believed was an activity nearer to this earth.

Education, it is said, is not merely an intellectual discipline. It is a discipline of the whole man. Education cannot ignore the relation of the individual to society. It must be geared to the service of man, towards his betterment, towards reduction of misery and the promotion of happiness through increased understanding, insight and wisdom.

The opportunities in nursing for self-development, for serving society, for the alleviation of distress, the promotion of comfort and for the promotion of health are unique. Nursing is no longer an adjunct to medicine—no longer an ancillary service, no longer a hand-

Miss L. Kabir with a patient.



maid but a partner. The nurse occupies a privileged and pivotal position in the three-way-communication between doctor, nurse and patient.

The essence of nursing is the safeguarding and building up of life forces in the individual and the race. This implies the conservation of physical and mental energies, and building up resistance and vigour in both the sick and the healthy.

Nursing is a fine art and an applied science. Sensitivity, warmth, imagination, talent and creative ability are as essential in the good nurse as a complete grasp of the scientific principles and methods of accurate observation and logical reasoning.

The near exorbitant demands made upon a nurse's physical and emotional stamina make a sound educational background incumbent. The preparation of good nurses is an educational rather than a training process.

Discipline and training are associated with exercise, drill and obedience to orders, to rules and regulations, and are used to produce skills of various kinds. While this method can produce mechanically expert workers, it cannot develop real character, nor produce resourceful and intelligent workers who can easily and readily adjust to new situations, and work out their own problems.

Training is a part of education, only a part. In a profession like nursing where the phenomena of life and death, of joy and suffering are so constantly being experienced, where so much depends upon the character, ability, integrity and judgement of the nurse, something far more than mechanical and impersonal efficiency is required. Manual dexterity is basic, but a broad knowledge of the causes, treatment and prevention of disease is also essential.

The good nurse is one who can use her head and heart as well as her hands; who can recognise the unique nature of every patient and situation; who can adapt her skills and learning; who can interpret the health needs of the family and help bring better health

to the community; who keeps alive a wide range of human, social and cultural interests; who refuses to fall into musty ruts of dead habits and routine and always retains her individuality.

Such a nurse must be *educated, not trained*. Educated in the sense that she must be capable of further and further growth and adjustment, of thinking things out and of making her own decisions.

To be associated with nursing education as a clinical instructor has been deeply satisfying and rewarding. In the education of nurses, practical experience in hospitals is an indispensable part of the preparation. Nursing education provides ample opportunity for early contact with actual situations, and recognises the importance of practical work which is so much emphasised in modern educational theory.

The most stimulating and interesting element in being a clinical instructor has been that the learning of the student is guided in a life situation. The dynamic quality of this kind of approach cannot be over-emphasised. The chief concern of the instructor is to organise a carefully planned programme in the clinical field to provide maximum opportunities for learning how to give total patient care, or to use a modern term, "comprehensive nursing care." The ward is the real life situation wherein the student has the opportunity of correlating and integrating the varied and seemingly unrelated knowledge gleaned in the classroom. Knowledge of anatomy and physiology, pharmacology, nutrition and dietetics, physics and chemistry, bacteriology, psychology (child or adult, normal and abnormal), sociology, nursing arts and the clinical speciality all converge with the aim of giving the patient total nursing care.

Thoughtful preparation is necessary to bring these factors to the student and to indicate the bearing and weightage of each upon the patient's condition.

Few of the frustrations encountered by the teacher of an abstract subject confront the nursing instructor. Learning day to day is

essential if the student nurse is to enjoy her work. Postponement of preparation until a fortnight before the final examination is impossible.

Strong motivations activate the student. In being given the charge for individual patient care she is impelled to give of her best. With skilled guidance a student does her utmost to bring her knowledge up-to-date, as the satisfaction she derives from giving intelligent care contrasts vividly with those occasions, when, unequipped to handle a situation, she is left petrified and insecure. Also, she knows that not only is her performance being evaluated by the instructor, but by the patient as well. Moreover, she is intensely interested in his recovery. The personal element ever present in the ward minimises the monotony and drudgery of routine. Good teaching methods can direct this natural interest toward the development of a skilled bedside nurse.

The opportunity for use of progressive teaching methods is present, and in fact a better opportunity is provided than often is presented in general education. The patient is the best subject to learn from. Then there are X-Rays and laboratory reports, also specimens. Amongst direct-teaching methods there are demonstrations, clinics, teaching rounds, to mention a few.

The scope of teaching in nursing is endless. I enjoy it, it keeps me alive and in touch with the latest advances in my profession. I enjoy the human contact, often very close, real and vibrant that teaching in a live situation
the *dramatis personae* a the patients
the students a the entire medical team.

I enjoy the double process of teaching and nursing and feel that often I succeed in transferring my own joy and satisfaction to my students.

The ultimate reward any teacher expects is a positive response from her students. I can think of very few alternatives that will induce me to change my profession.

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