

started off, glad to leave Rámsu ! In many places we had very narrow and rough paths to walk on, but the worst was when we had to cross a swirling stream which was spanned by two tree trunks with stones balanced between them, which wobbled alarmingly as one stepped from one to another ! We reached the dak bungalow without any untoward happening, and great was our joy to have tea with milk in, nicely served on a clean cloth, and to have hot baths, after the three days with a very limited supply of water, no convenience for washing and very great difficulty in getting food, partly owing to the villagers' own supply being rather short, and partly because some of them thought we were the cause of the disaster. In spite of promises that our luggage should be sent on the next day, we did not receive it until three days later, so we had to manage with very little variety of clothes. After staying in Banihál six days, we were able to obtain a lorry and continue our journey to Pahlgám, arriving ten days later than we had at first hoped. We saw many signs all along the road of the havoc wrought by the storm and waters. In one place the river had made its bed 25 ft. deeper than normal because huge firm rocks had prevented the sides being broken down. Huge boulders were in our path, having fallen from the side making it very difficult to get the lorry past. Very often it looked as if it would be impossible to guide the lorry safely through all the obstacles, and any one of the obstacles might have caused it to turn over and down the precipice at the side. But we were fortunate in having a splendid driver, who took us safely to our journey's end, where we found three friends, who had left a week earlier than we did, looking anxiously for us.

THE NURSES' UNIFORM

(Continued from November)

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IT was not until the middle of the 19th century that reforms in hospital and nursing work took definite shape. The work of the Quakeress Elizabeth Fry and similar high church movements in England, and the organisation of the Deaconess movement under the Flieðnersat Kaiserwerth, Germany, were all efforts to find a way for enlisting a better class of women in the care of the sick and with them came the re-establishment of uniform costumes for those so engaged.⁹ The regulations for the dress and conduct of the Institution of Nursing Sisters founded by Mrs. Fry in 1840 were rigid.¹⁰ The sisters were to wear "a neat and becoming uniform" consisting indoors of print dresses, voluminous aprons, brown

holland, for the probationers, and plain muslin caps. The outdoor uniform was a quaintly cut dress of Quaker grey stuff with long black cloak, and black bonnet, having no trimmings save a long black veil. In no case were "gold ornaments or jewelry, lace, embroidery, feathers or artificial flowers" to be worn. These sisters were obliged always to appear in the dress of the institution. It is interesting to note that this society has carried on since 1840 with very little alteration in the regulations and customs. The roll which is signed by every sister has the bye-laws at the beginning which still contains the rule forbidding the sisters to accept "mourning money" which is a reminder of an old-time usage of which the Mrs. Camps took full advantage. The immortal "Sairey" always went to a laying-out in a dress of rusty black, very rusty, and invariably received a new one for the funeral.¹¹ Their present uniform is very similar to the original one.

After the period of the coarse untrained nurse such as is described in Dickens "Martin Chuzzlewit," about whose costume perhaps the less said the better, same as the Protestant order of the sisters of St. John's House in London. For them we read that the gowns and bonnets provided were of a quaint style calculated to chasten the spirit of the most frivolous minded young woman. The cap was similar to that worn by the Deaconesses at Kaiserwerth.

The earliest uniforms for nurses at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, first required in 1680 were a livery of dark coloured cloth.¹² In others for the most part the dresses were of dark heavy material, as dark cluny, rough, dark, maroon cloth, black serge, black woollen dresses, black alpaca and holland brown. These dresses were made with high collars, long sleeves and a full skirt touching the ground, as it was considered a disgrace for a lady's neck, arms and ankles to show. From these beginnings have developed the various uniforms of to-day.

The idea of a uniform was not liked at first in American schools, and it was not at once adopted. The members of the Bellevue Hospital (in New York) Committee understood the moral effect for they reported "a uniform however simple is indispensable and should be rigidly enforced. It is advantageous on the ground of economy as well as neatness and its effects on a corps of nurses is the same as on a company of soldiers." Prejudice against a uniform at this school, however, disappeared when a nurse who was a member of a prominent family appeared in a dress with greyish blue stripes, and apron and cap of white. She looked so well the other nurses were glad to adopt a similar costume. A long grey stuff dress was worn in winter and a calico in summer, simply made with a white apron and cap, and brown linen cuffs covering the sleeves from the wrist to the elbow. In 1880 the grey stuff dress for winter was abolished and an easily laundered dress was worn all the year.

In 1864 the Red Cross adopted a uniform to distinguish and protect its workers. The insignia adopted was a red cross on white field. This was worn upon the arm. This idea was taken from the custom of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem in the middle ages who used the same insignia and were known as "Knights of the Red Cross."¹³

The first government uniform was adopted by England. The costume for nurses who were to go to war was a loose wrapping gown of dark grey tweed, worsted jacket, plain linen collar and thick white cap. Passing over the right shoulder was a broad strip of brown holland embroidered in red worsted with the words "Scutari Hospital." Short grey worsted cloak, brown straw bonnet and veil completed the costume.¹⁴ It is said that the short shoulder cape of the uniform of the present English Army Sister is a relic of the regulation of Miss Nightingale that such a short cape should be worn by nurses "to hide the figure."

In the civil war in the United States women who were employed to care for the sick and wounded did not wear a uniform but we are told that women so employed were not allowed to wear hoop skirts!

The present outdoor uniform of the Nurse Corps of the United States Army is simple—Norfolk coat and skirt of the same material and colour of the uniform of Army men, olive drab. It is worn with white shirt waist and collar with black tie. The cap is small, close-fitting, similar to an aviator's cap. On this uniform are worn the same buttons and insignia of the corresponding ranks of American Army officers. This costume has been a recent development, evolved for its practicality and simplicity during and after the World War. The indoor uniform is similar to the white one-piece uniform worn by most graduate nurses in the United States. It too has evolved and changed with changing fashions and conforms to the modern style of straight hanging, waistless dresses, with belt about the hips, long sleeves with cuffs, and low turned down collar. The skirts are worn short for comfort, convenience and style.

In the United States traditions are not such hallowed things as they are in other countries, and for that reason old customs and old ideas are discarded rapidly with the changing times and as the needs of the occasion demand. It has never been thought necessary that nurses should appear old-fashioned and different from their sisters of other callings and in consequence both indoor and outdoor uniforms have been made stylish and practicable and at the same time economical and good to look at. Traditions however have been strong in the matter of the indoor cap which certainly in few hospitals of the United States can be claimed to be adopted to the original purpose of covering the hair. With the present day custom of wearing short hair, a custom which commends itself especially to nurses, if for no other reason than ease of washing, with this custom, the caps of many schools of nursing do not fit at

all. They are apparently worn for purposes of ornament only, and it is very questionable whether with the difficulty of fastening some caps on short hair this purpose is achieved.

The getting away from tight bodies, high collars, cumbersome kerchiefs, voluminous skirts, long stiff cuffs and other time honoured relics has certainly been in the line of progress, for comfort, simplicity, economy of money and time, and also good looks, and inconspicuousness should be the criteria by which a nurse's uniform should be measured. In many operating rooms where suitability for a particular purpose is the main point to be considered, nurses wear customs similar to those worn by the doctors, namely trousers and gowns. Here is exemplified the idea that a uniform is a necessary tool for accomplishing work in the best possible way.

Except for the uniform of the various kinds of public health nurses, outdoor uniforms for nurses are seldom seen on the streets of American cities. Army and Navy nurses must wear them on certain occasions and other nurses of Federal services and occasionally Red Cross nurses on active duty appear in them, but by far the great majority of American nurses do not even own an outdoor uniform. For except when actually caring for the sick or on duty in institutions they appear as do other women and cannot be distinguished from them. There are some who feel that in fact that the uniform of highly qualified professional nurses, even those of executive nurses may be purchased and worn by commercial demonstrators, under graduates, nursery maids, governesses, manicurists, and hairdressers detracts from the dignity and respect that should be accorded it. No method as yet has been devised for controlling this matter, as has been done to some extent in other countries. One does not often hear of the use of the cap of particular schools by unwarranted persons, but it may occur more than is generally known.

The question of foot wear for nurses is an important one, for if nurses are to live up to the ideal set before them of being teachers of health, they must see that the shoes they wear are properly supporting and allowing freedom of movement and comfort. Since example is one of the greatest forces for influence, nurses should hold before themselves, whether in uniform or out of it, the ideal of suitability, comfort, simplicity, economy and good looks. For even in professional work a thing of beauty is a joy for ever and the sick and the troubled need all the joy that can be procured for them.

Cultivate the habit of saying kindly words and giving a smile on those you meet from day to day, for the cultivation of a kindly disposition belongs in great part to the overcoming of selfishness.