

WHAT WORK.

LIFE is very full of opportunity, especially in these days when so many professions are open to women, and as women, we are desirous of making use of these opportunities to the full. Each woman must be fully persuaded in her own mind as to what work suits her best, because each one is by nature best fitted for a certain kind of work. Carlyle says: "Let each man know his own life work and then do it" and this is for us women too, but the question is, how shall we *know* it. I believe first of all we must wait with *open* mind; it is curious how governed we are in our decisions by prejudice, because from time immemorial we have seen the native durzi sitting, sewing in the verandah, we have come to the conclusion that dressmaking is something beneath us; because the khan-samah has always cooked for us we should not think of attempting cooking, it is the servants' work we say. And it is just the same in such an exalted vocation as nursing, because we see there are so many things to be done, which we have always looked upon as purely "servants' work," we may think some other profession better suited to us as being more dignified. There is a verse in the Bible which says: "He that is greatest among you shall be servant of all" I consider the nursing profession among the highest kinds of service. First it is undoubtedly a *profession*, as much as any other profession. It takes careful training of every faculty that a human being possesses. The body must be strengthened and developed, the mind must be quick, alert, and well informed as to how to act under a great variety of circumstances, and above all the spirit must be disciplined in an exceptional manner. I take it that nothing demands all of you, and the best of you, like nursing for on you nurses depend so much the recovery of your patient, not only physically, but mentally. We know the effect of a long trying illness on the mind, and it is the nurse who is constantly with the patient, who is able to act as a tonic to the mind whilst she cares for the body. The patient is at the time of sickness in her hands and it often lies with her solely as to what is to be the result of this illness on the patient's mind as well as to the kind of recovery the patient shall make. A lady told me recently that her nurses so worried her after a severe and trying operation to try and get her to let them put another patient in her room that her recovery was considerably retarded. Now this was not professional to say the least of it, and it is because there is a danger of thinking that any sort of person will do for a nurse that this kind of thing happens and other carelessnesses which cannot be rectified once they have been allowed to happen. It is the lack of the professional spirit that is responsible for much inferior work in every

profession, and by this I do not mean an exalted notion of one's position, but a sense of the demands that that position makes on whoever is called to fill it. It demands the very best we have to give, and therefore it is that such a calling as that of a nurse is not only a profession, but it is a life. That is, that for the time being the whole of you must go into your work, it must have your very best, and that of a superior quality: if all a nurse has to give is as we say "a poor thing at best," then she had better not offer for a nurse's training, for this profession needs women with ability, brains and heart. Her brains have to supplement the doctor's; according to her professional knowledge, and quickness of perception will be aided and I may say guided, and her heart must co-operate with the head. So I would urge that some of the best among our young women should offer themselves for this work, and count it of true dignity; granted it means hard work, long hours, much that is trying and difficult, plenty to test one in every way, but by bravely facing difficulty, and learning a wise self-control when circumstances are trying we gain the strong patient character which is a part of the glory of womanhood and peculiarly the ideal characteristic of a good nurse. Well, may woman covet the opportunity which the profession of nursing affords to become the "good angel" in many a heart and home.

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NURSING.

THE development of sick-nursing, which has brought into existence a large, highly-skilled, and organised profession, is one of the most notable features, of modern social life. The evolution of the sick-nurse is mainly due to three very diverse influences—religion, war, and science. It was religion which first induced ladies, in the earlier ages to take up the care of the sick as a charitable duty. The earliest record we have was Fabiola, a patrician Roman lady, who in A. D. 380 founded a hospital in Rome with convalescent home attached. She had a rival in the Empress Flaccilla (A. D. 379—395) who personally visited hospitals and attended on the sick. In the reign of Honorius (A. D. 395—423) six hundred women were engaged in the hospitals in Alexandria. These institutions were managed by the clergy, and throughout the dark and middle ages the hospital and nursing systems were connected with religious bodies. The names of the oldest foundations which still survive, such as the Hotel Dieu in Paris, St. Thomas's and St. Bartholomew's in London, the order of St. Augustine, and that of St. John of Jerusalem, indicate the original religious connection. In Protestant countries a secular nursing system came in with the Re-