

Ella's tears fell fast now, and some of them rolled unbidden on to the fingers of the nearest mourner, a girl barely out of her teens, who looked up in surprise. "Sympathy," said she, "is ever a healing ointment; but oh, king, how is it that a child of such tender years is in this sad place? Pray release her."

Fuego glanced at Ella and read an echo to the request in the eloquence of her streaming eyes. "She shall go," said he, "though she has not seen half I might show her. 'Tis only through the gratifying of a foolish whim that you see her here, for her time has not yet

come. Go, child of the sunshine woven hair, and be in future content when elders warn thee not to pry into books, since knowledge and experience often prove bitter things."

Sobbing, Ella hurried out into the road, where the stones were turning dull red and darkness gathered overhead. But the explorer stumbled on, fearful of losing the way, till she trod on a sharp stone that rolled from under her feet, throwing her violently on to her face. She gave a cry of despair and fell down, down, she knew not whither, into utter blackness—then came unconsciousness.

Next minute Ella found herself rubbing her eyes as she sat on the hearthrug, before a fire that had burnt itself out into a few hot cinders and grey ashes. "I must have been asleep," said the little girl to herself, "but oh, how glad I am that was a dream!"

What need to tell you, dear readers, that, whether dream or reality, Ella did not forget her visit to fire country, and for the future was content to curb her curiosity in the matter of books, because as an old saw truly hath it,

"A burnt child dreads the fire."

## HOW TO BECOME A HOSPITAL NURSE.



HERE are two opinions about hospital-nursing, and both, from being extreme, are erroneous. Some people thinking that the life must be very hard and monotonous—the latter it seldom is—whilst

others seem to have a vague idea that it consists merely of putting on a becoming cap and uniform in which to play at work.

That the work is often hard, and the training necessary a thorough, and even a severe one, I will not dispute, but even this has its compensations in the knowledge that one is aiding the relief of human misery and suffering, and from the fact that there is a restful variety in the work.

After some years of experience I can truthfully say that it is one of the most suitable professions for any woman who has tenderness, courage, patience, common sense and a love and pity for humanity and its sufferings.

To become a "probationer" (which is the first step on the road) is, in most cases, comparatively easy. It is necessary to be over twenty to become one in a general hospital, but girls of that age and under are eligible for children's hospitals. One desiring to become a nurse should write to the matrons of, say, three or four of the largest hospitals for a copy of the rules and regulations applying to "probationers," enclosing a large, addressed and ready-stamped envelope. With reference to the best hospitals in which to begin, it is generally conceded that those devoted to children are the best training grounds, those devoted to special diseases being the least desirable from the special and not general character of the experience which will be obtained.

I will suppose, however, that you are over twenty-four, and have applied for particulars to several of the general hospitals. You have now received these, and the next thing is for you to make up your mind as to which one has the rules and regulations with which you can most easily comply. The next step is to call upon the matron of that particular hospital with the view of arranging to enter the institution as a "probationer." With reference to the payment of a premium—which varies from £10 to £50—it is not absolutely necessary to make any such payment, but if able to do so it should be a point of honour not to take everything and give nothing. There is another

side to this question. If you enter as a non-paying "probationer" it is more than probable that you will be required to sign an agreement to serve the hospital for a period of three years after you have done your training, at a salary for the first year of £12 to £14, for the second year one of £16 to £18, and for the third year one of £20. After which (if you remain) the salary will be governed by the position to which you have attained. But, with the exception of a few matrons' posts, the maximum is about £100 a year. The charge nurses receiving between £30 and £50.

As a probationer one does very little actual nursing. The rule being to begin at the beginning, which involves the learning of how to sweep the wards, scrub the lockers, clean utensils, and attend on the senior nurse. If one proves quick, and anxious to learn, there is ample opportunity for doing so, the other nurses being almost always sisterly, and willing to help an eager learner. The probationer must not, however, be content with acquiring the practical part of the profession of nursing. She will have to study anatomy, physiology, and the numberless technical terms used in surgery and medicine. And to learn these things it will be necessary to attend lectures every week for six months; a three months' course of medical lectures and a three months' surgical. During the first year one works under a sister and staff nurse, and acquires a knowledge of bandaging, splint padding, poulticing, fomenting, and how to use and apply the various lotions and ointments.

At the end of this period the probationer is examined by means of a series of papers upon surgical and medical points, set by the lecturers, the examination usually lasting a couple of days. She is then examined  *viva voce* by the lecturers and matron, when questions are put to her with reference to such subjects as the bones (and their positions) in the human body, poulticing, bed-making, bandaging, etc. It is also necessary for the probationer to have obtained the marks, awarded by the matron, for good conduct, punctuality, etc.

The examination successfully passed the probationer is appointed a staff nurse, and is given the charge or part charge of one of the various wards, having now, in her turn, to train and assist a probationer, and to learn from the physicians and surgeons, and the ward sister the higher and more complicated branches of nursing. One of her duties as staff nurse being to visit all the beds with the sister and doctor, and to carefully watch and report to him all the symptoms and variations of the patients' condition, and to carry out orders. If her ward be a surgical one she has to see to all the various dressings for wounds, padded splints, and bandages, so that they may be always ready for immediate use. To look after the medicine cupboard, and know

the use and application of the various drugs. She must take temperatures, keep the charts for the doctor's inspection accurately and neatly, be prepared to assist the surgeons in their operations, and the ward dressers in their duties. And, when the sister is absent to undertake her work in addition to her own.

At the end of the year the nurse is again examined, this examination being far more difficult than the former one, as may be naturally supposed. Then, after another year's training and experience in the ward comes another examination, which, if passed satisfactorily, entitles her to her certificate. To the nurse who heads the list a gold medal is awarded, and then, after three months' training in house-keeping, and a similar time spent in carrying out the duties of night superintendent, she is eligible for the position of sister.

The hours in most hospitals are undoubtedly too long. In most one is called at 6 A.M., breakfasts at 6.30, has to be in the ward by 7 o'clock and remain there till 12.30, and again is in the ward from 1 P.M. till 9 at night, a spell of eight hours' duration, luncheon being generally served in the ward kitchen.

Every other day one is off-duty two hours and a-half, which time is supposed to be spent out of doors, a pass being given one to be delivered up to the porter at the lodge gates, who enters the time of the going out and coming in in a book kept for that purpose.

Every month leave of absence is given for the nurse to be out from 7 A.M. till 9 P.M., or even later. And during the year a fortnight's holiday is allowed by the majority of hospitals.

On Sunday the nurses are expected to attend divine worship at least once. If one is off duty in the morning one is expected to attend the chapel attached to the hospital, unless a member of another religious body, in which case one is allowed to attend one's own place of worship.

At eight o'clock of a week day the lights are lowered, and in some hospitals those whose work is done are allowed out for an hour. At 9 o'clock comes supper, followed at 9.30 by prayers, and then the day nurses' duties are done.

Of course the routine, though very similar, is not absolutely the same in all hospitals, the hours of duty, etc., varying slightly in some from others.

I have described how to become a hospital nurse, and the hard and steady work which is necessary to fit one for the position. And in conclusion I have nothing to add except that the life seems to grow more easy every day, and that as one works one's way upward, always deeply interesting, it becomes more and more so. There are little touches of romance, tenderness and gratitude, too, which all serve to brighten this life of ministering to the sick and suffering.