

well-served food, and a quiet and comfortable bedroom in the Nursing Home. This excellent system has already been inaugurated in many modernised Hospitals (notably in the Royal Infirmary, Manchester), instead of a room off the Ward, which may also be used in the day-time as well as at night, where the air is never fresh, and where it is certain that the rest of an anxious and conscientious woman will be disturbed, and, in consequence, her energies impaired, and, more often than not, her temper sharpened to an unpleasant degree. What is necessary to ensure the best brain-work, is the very best health that can be maintained; and I have no hesitation in stating, from some personal experience, that nothing after a time has such a deteriorating effect upon health and spirits, and, in consequence, upon the *quality* of the work which a Hospital Sister's duty demands from her, as the present pernicious system of "living on the spot." When it is more generally understood that what is required from a Sister is *quality*, not *quantity*, in her work, we shall cease to hear the oft-repeated lament of Hospital authorities, "How rare is a really good Sister!"

It is most essential that a Sister should walk into her Ward *punctually* in the morning, not later than eight a.m., refreshed by rest; calm and clear in mind; ready to attack the long day's duties with energy and method; remembering that it is her judgment, her memory, her skill, that are the mainspring upon which hinges the regularity and working of the Ward. This she is quite unable to do for long, without sleep and good food.

"Oh! Damian, you do not mean to say that you would like to be separated from your patients at night!" exclaims the critic at my feet.

"Under existing arrangements, when I can perhaps be of use to them, certainly not; but I am alluding to the good time coming in the future, when in every Hospital, and, I hope, Infirmary, we shall find a *sufficient* supply of thoroughly experienced Nurses on night duty; when the Night Sister will be accommodated with a room, and ample means of communication, in the midst of her patients, instead of being an isolated being, whose position is anomalous, and who, in the performance of her duty, often finds herself tripping on debatable ground, and incurring the resentment of a fellow-worker, less conscientious than herself."

Doris sighs.

"We must not blame others too severely," she says, "for their dislike to innovations. Having been Night Sisters ourselves, has made us more particular 'to render to Cæsar, the things that are Cæsar's' than we otherwise might have been."

"That may be so," I answer. "But considering that if the Chairman thought well to seat himself

on a camp-stool in the centre of your Ward from 'early morning till dewy eve,' you could not possibly be more punctilious in the performance of your duty than you are, my argument cannot affect you; and if we search diligently in the depths of our hearts, for the true motives which prompt the dislike to being even partially relieved from our duties by another, devotion to duty will not be the only one found there. There are such weaknesses in the female character, as inordinate love of power—a species of vanity, which finds it hard to recognise in another the special aptitude to perform certain duties, which we believe ourselves to possess; and that still more insidious vice, from which so few Matrons are entirely free—jealousy."

"Ah! that is all too true," says Doris gently; "and yet do not let us forget the many acts of unselfish devotion, prompted by the very highest human motives, of which nearly all women are capable, and of which we have seen so many instances during our Hospital career; or the numbers of amiable and energetic women we have seen degenerate into sharp-tempered invalids, or listless incapables, through the overstrain of mind and body, which these acts of unselfish devotion entail. I have not yet forgotten Nursing my first ovariectomy, when it was the rule for one Nurse to take entire charge of the case for the first *fifty-six hours*. It was an experience calculated to teach poor humanity "how frail a thing is man!" Yet this relic of barbarism is still considered necessary, and indulged in by the order of some surgeons!

"I too have spent hours of terrible anxiety in that little operation Ward," I chime in. "With what enthusiasm I attended the operation; watching my patient for the first night, like a cat watching a mouse; how all the second day I kept surprisingly brisk, on periodical draughts of tea, until left alone at night, and then the frightful struggle to keep sleep at bay, the terror of closing my eyes on duty, how my head throbbed and ached by morning, and how, after having undergone this torture—I hope, without neglecting my patient, but I am not sure—I was released for twelve hours' rest; but no sleep would ease my burning eye-balls. It is under such circumstances, I should imagine, that weak-minded women have recourse to the chloral bottle."

"It was the toasting-fork which brought that folly to a crisis," laughed Doris. And I laugh too, recollecting well the scene. During the time I was Night Sister I met matron on my round about 2 a.m.; together, we visited Miriam Ward. Two days previously, a most serious abdominal section had been performed; noiselessly we opened the door to see that all was right and nothing wanted; there were two beds in the Ward; on one the patient was lying awake; on

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