

marks for those moral qualities which are the very essence of the character of a good Nurse. The Matron's signature should appear on the certificate granted to every Nurse at all Training Schools, and it is imperatively necessary that she should really have a conscientious knowledge of their capabilities and characteristics before she pledges herself as to their efficiency.

Here I should like to say a few words with regard to the *qualifying* of certificates granted to Nurses by any of the persons signing such, or even by the Governing Body of the Hospital itself. A certificate should be impartial testimony that the individual Nurse has attained a certain standard of efficiency, and in drafting such a document, no opportunity for depreciatory or laudatory comments should be possible. Either the Nurse has or has not displayed those qualities, that degree of skill and knowledge, required by the authorities, lay and Medical, of the Hospital, to entitle them to consider her a well-trained Nurse. The certificate should be withheld if she is unworthy; if she deserves it, it should be awarded to her. Any expression of individual opinion on the part of those under whom she has worked should take the form of private testimonials, as special evidence of their individual sense of her worth, and should certainly not be incorporated—to suit private ends—in a public document, granted by the Governing Body in its official capacity.

The course of training at different schools varies also as yet so materially in its severity and length; the test of examination is as yet so unequal, that the amount of scientific and theoretical knowledge which a Nurse must be proved to possess in one Hospital, and for which a certificate is granted, is far below the requirements of a sister Institution; so that the simple "pass" at one Training School may mean a longer training, a more thorough knowledge, than the elaborate "first-class certificate" of another.

Therefore, upon every ground the certificate should stand for what it in reality should be—a sign that the Nurse possesses the knowledge which the authorities of her particular Hospital consider sufficient and necessary for a Trained Nurse.

The Matron should, I venture to believe, most distinctly deprecate the habit, indulged in chiefly by junior Resident Medical Officers, of giving private testimonials to Nurses and Probationers who are still pupils only of the Nursing School of their Hospital. Many Probationers, who are compelled to leave, and curtail their training, either from ill-health, or some other reason, depart equipped with such testimonials, given with the best intentions and from the kindest motives, but often with so conspicuous a lack of judgment, that they are practically worthless in the eyes of

all competent authorities, and are only recognised by those who are unable to judge of their proper value. No Nurse, who is still subject to the rules of her Training School, should be permitted to receive a private testimonial from any member of the Medical Staff of the Hospital, without first obtaining the sanction of the authorities of the Institution. I know of one Hospital in London where this rule is enforced, both as regards the Visiting and Resident Staff, with the result that certificates and testimonials from that Hospital have a very distinct and real value.

The hold a Hospital retains over its Probationers, and the guarantee it can give to the public, is very slight, if any woman who remains a short period in its service—considerably, perhaps, below the time that is considered requisite for a thorough training—can collect a budget of testimonials from members of the Junior Staff, having a fictitious value far above their real worth, in the eyes of the outside public, which necessarily is not very capable of discrimination in such matters.

Last, and not least, the Matron should carefully consider her own health—not from any selfish motive, but that she may be able to give of her very best in performing her duty. Ill-health, even when slight, often leads to irritability, want of energy, depression, and incapacity to grapple calmly and with due attention with the thousand and one duties and troubles which form the round of a Matron's daily life. Over-work of body and brain, and incessant anxiety, lead many Matrons to deny themselves needful rest and change, and proper hours of sleep. This always brings its own punishment in exhaustion and illness. Having made the best arrangements, after conscientious deliberation, of which she is capable, having selected subordinates in whom she can trust, let her exercise all due and proper supervision over them, and cease from worry. If she is conscious of having done her duty to the utmost of her abilities, she can do no more. A state of over-anxiety and constant distrust is bad, both for herself and all who have to work under her, and shows a lack of self-confidence, which speedily infects those who should implicitly rely upon her judgment.

The Committees of most Hospitals make a great mistake in not allowing their officers, especially those occupying very responsible positions, long enough holidays. Whilst the mistresses of schools and colleges—who have certainly not more work, trouble and supervision than a Matron—generally have three clear months in the year, a Matron is fortunate if she can claim one. Arrangements should always be made for her to have at least six weeks' absence in each twelve months.

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