

How is the Standard of Training in Small Hospitals to be Raised?

BY E. J. R. LANDALE.

WHILE most of our Metropolitan Hospitals have been advancing surely with improvements on the old system of management and nursing, much that is obsolete in large cities still lingers, and indeed, shows signs of dying hard, in the smaller Provincial Hospitals; and thus, while a higher standard of nursing is demanded by the public, and supplied by the well-organised Training Schools, some of our small Provincial Hospitals continue to send out year after year, second-rate Nurses, who must be a hindrance to the work of those who are to raise and keep up the professional standard.

It is somewhat difficult to give an opinion as to the reason of the continuance of this abuse. There is, no doubt, a certain apathy, as there is most truly a deplorable ignorance, on the subject of nursing among many of the managers of small Hospitals, but it seems to me there are other factors in the problem. Not want of work for Nurses to learn in—alas! the "ills that flesh is heir

to" are much the same everywhere. Not in the Nurses themselves—there are crowds of young women so much in earnest that they will go anywhere to learn, if they feel sure that they will receive teaching. But who, in the small Hospitals, can teach them? In the organised Training Schools, courses of lectures are given by some of the Honorary Visiting Staff, but in small Hospitals the Honoraries are too busy; probably, men struggling with the care of a large general practice, and they find the Hospital *patients* are as much as they can manage. They have no time for teaching Nurses. The teaching must then devolve on the Matron or the Resident Medical Officer (if there be one). My observation is, that though now and then the teaching in class of a R.M.O. may be most valuable, it is better not to rely on him. Young men come and go, and they, too, may, or may not, be able to impart what knowledge it is desirable a Nurse should have; so that at last we answer our question by deciding on the Matron as the person who is responsible for the Nurse's teaching. She alone knows how to give the theory a practical turn in the Wards, and how to make the work in the Wards more intelligent by adding to it the interest of the theory taught in class. But, connected with the class of Hospitals of which I am speaking, there are cir-

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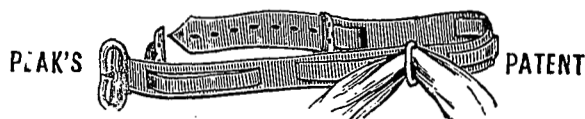
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