

it has ceased to be one of the topics. Indeed, it is perhaps only when the reformation of Hospitals has ceased to be a fashionable form of philanthropy that the real and needed reform in the conditions under which Nurses' work will be carried out. "Don Quixote" says some very sensible things. It is most true that the more willing the self-sacrifice of the Nurse, the greater is the responsibility of those who are set over her. This is the fact which Hospital Committees have to learn. There is no limit, till physical endurance can stand no more, to the work that can be got out of good Nurses. The excitement of their work in times of emergency and their training in self-discipline carry them a long way; it is against their creed and tradition to give in, and they work on till they break down so utterly that death or invalidism is the result, unless prevented. Who will prevent them? It is the Matron's duty, and happily there are many Matrons who do, but in the face of tremendous difficulties and perpetual anxiety. With a cheese-paring Committee on one hand, and the honest desire to keep down all unnecessary expenditure of money that is money of the poor—a much heavier responsibility than if it were looked upon as the money of the Committee—some Matrons try one solution of the difficulty, some another. Where there is room, lady pupils are taken, if for less than a year a very questionable benefit, for though their fees meet the increase of expenditure, the constant change of workers is most harassing to the Ward-Sisters, and they unsettle the other Nurses. What we want in the training of Probationers, and the working conditions for all Hospital Nurses is:—Such a staff (numerically) as will allow of each one having not only sufficient time off duty for rest and recreation, but that there shall be such a sufficiency of hands to do the work in the best possible way, and so Probationers be taught in the best possible way. Under the present system the work is too often rushed through without either system or instruction, and the Probationer has to learn by her mistakes rather than by her teachers. I have not much sympathy with the people who talk about "a genius for Nursing," as if any genius were perfect without training. I do not think there is much of the old-fashioned scullery work given to Probationers now. Dusting, cleaning of vessels, etc., must of course form a very valuable part of her training, and some Probationers require much more of that preliminary than others; it depends to a great extent how they have been brought up at home. Nothing trains better in the habit of observation than dusting and the little niceties of ward cleaning. And nothing teaches method better. I knew a provincial Matron who always taught her Probationers to time their work, and her Nurses told me that it had become an unknown thing for any of them to stop in the middle of any piece of work, but that each duty,

sweeping, dusting, and bed-making was done with an intensity of attention that gave very good results.

For the first year Probationers ought to be Probationers only, *i.e.*, on probation for more responsible work, and not till their second year should they be promoted to responsible charge. Work, without responsibility, would leave their minds free to profit by teaching.

With Matrons and Nursing Associations all earnestly striving for improvement, there is good hope that both the work, and the conditions under which it is carried out, will be at least bettered, but what is to be done for the instruction of Hospital Managers? How are our Boards and Ladies Committees to be taught their duties? How are we to meet the crass ignorance and the obstinate opinionateness of the people who interest themselves in the work, it is true, but who have no idea what that work really entails on the workers?—who consider the Matron and Nurses as mere parts of the Hospital machinery, and only as such criticise them. The more human side of their life never appeals to them at all.

When the choice comes before such people, of women to fill a Matron's or Sister's vacant post, how do they acquit themselves? If for a Matronship, it is often the best dressed, handsomest woman, someone with a "presence," whose manner pleases them, and who has known how best to flatter their sense of importance, who is chosen by the majority of votes, provided she has also good testimonials as to her capacity for economical house keeping. Do they ever inquire whether she has had a good influence over her Nurses? Do they ever try to discover whether the Probationers she has had under her have gone on into other work well qualified, and doing credit to what she taught?

I think the Matron with the concurrence of the Visiting Surgeon or Physician of the ward is the person to choose a Ward Sister, and many Committees do really leave it entirely in the Matron's hands, but there are some who are very jealous of more than a mere suggestion from the Matron. True, she has the trouble of advertising and the correspondence, and then the Committee, as often as not, elect singularly unfit persons from their ignorance of what is required. They know nothing of the details of the work, and if they think of it at all, as measured by their own lives, they are content to shrug their shoulders and say, "It has always been so." "They must like it or they would not be Nurses."

It seems to me that if *all* the members of the Hospital Committee would work in their office much more seriously than has been the case usually, and each one feel her and his individual responsibility much more heavily, something might be done. Not in haste and under impulse, but let them get to know their Matron and Doctors, and

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