

not openly express, lest they should be discharged as those who have ventured to complain in the past have summarily been, seems to be against the long hours of standing and working, the short holidays, the poor food, and the general system of tittle-tattle that makes each one feel herself in the presence of spies; indeed, the spirit of espionage is carried to such a pitch that every new Probationer is warned by more than one kindly colleague to guard against expressing any opinion adverse to the management of the Hospital if she wishes to complete her course of training. It must be understood that a probationer once discharged will find it impossible to obtain admission to another Hospital.

*'HER OWN PRIVATE BEDROOM.'*

I see stated in several places that 'it is a special feature of the accommodation provided for the Nursing staff that every one has her own private bedroom.' Instead of this being the case I found that there are double rooms over in Philpot Street; that there are nearly always one or more Nurses not on the sick list, who for lack of other accommodation sleep in the sick-room; that Nurses on the private staff returning from their private cases are often stowed away over one of the wards, and have to keep their effects in the box-room of the Nursing Home, where they must repair for a change of clothing. Yet this is of minor consideration besides the facts of Nurses who, after having worked twelve hours in the wards, sleep in a room where others are suffering from various illnesses, of which Hospital throat—contracted through breathing the poisonous atmosphere of the wards—is one. But there seems no tender spirit of consideration on this point. I was ill and taken to the sick-room after a few days' work in the wards. There was a pretty girl there, the muscles of whose feet were giving way, and she was 'going flat,' as the term went, *i.e.*, flat-footed. The doctor advised her to get surgical boots, which are supposed to ameliorate this condition; but before she could get her boots she was ordered to go on duty in the wards. I saw the Sister bind up her feet in wide bandages, and help her to put on her ordinary shoes, after which, amid many protests of 'I think it a shame, a downright shame,' on the part of those present, she went back to work. I consider it an outrage that a Nurse should be made to forego any possible chance there might have been for bettering the condition of her feet. Flat-footed people walk as though they were locomoting by means of flippers; and that girls should be deformed thus for life is nothing short of criminal.

There are many drawbacks to a Nurse's recovery in the sick-room. In the first place, Nurses who are friends of the sick ones have a fashion of dropping into the place after that awful 9.30 'supper' (!) and chattering on indefinitely; and no matter how nervous and sleepy one is, this disturbance goes on indefinitely. Then there is the unavoidable entrance of the night Nurses to see if all is right which wakes every one up; and at times there is the illness and restlessness of one's neighbour to disturb one. Another thing: there are almost always one or two Nurses on duty who, for lack of other accommodation, have to sleep in the sick-room, and they must get up at ten minutes to six to dress. I did not think I ever should have got better had I not taken a vacation.

When I went back after my vacation I was asked if I would sleep in the sick-room as no room had been prepared for me. I found the beds contained one Nurse

suffering from 'Hospital throat' and another had contracted what will render her useless for life as a Hospital Nurse—serious inflammation and a kind of rupture of the veins, this caused by overwork. I learn she will have to leave the Hospital as soon as she is able, and cannot be again put to work in the wards in which she has been rendered useless; and I learn such cases are not uncommon at the London. During the next day I was stowed away in the room of one of the sick Nurses. The wardrobe was locked, the drawer chest filled with her clothing, and the tops of everything but the hamper covered with books and knick-knacks. There was absolutely nowhere to put my traps, and driving nails in the walls is strictly forbidden, so I had to lay my dresses across the hamper and 'live in my valises' until I left the Hospital—thank God—for ever.

This is how the 'special feature' provides each Nurse with her own private bedroom!

WHAT TO DO.

In conclusion, the following are the improvements which seem to me to be absolutely necessary in the Nursing department of the London Hospital:—

1. That there should be efficient supervision by a capable House Governor and Matron.

2. That these officials should be controlled by a Committee composed of both men and women so that the financial and domestic departments may be equally well attended to.

3. That the hours of work for Nurses should be re-organised and shortened.

4. That the dietary of the Nurses should be improved and that the Nurses' holidays should be lengthened.

5. That only the most suitable candidates in point of health, strength, and education should be admitted as Probationers to the Hospital.

6. That in order to keep a supply of thoroughly trained Nurses in the wards their terms of training shall be extended to three years instead of one or two years of this time being spent in attendance upon private patients outside of the Hospital.

7. That the office of Sister should only be filled by certificated Nurses.

8. That Probationers shall be appointed and discharged by the House Committee, and that all reports and accusations relating to their work and their conduct shall be made in writing, in order that accused may have an open and fair hearing, instead of simply being discharged and given no reason for dismissal.

The fact that these accusations can be made, and proved, against the management of the London Hospital necessitates in my opinion the holding of an open inquiry into these and any other matters which may be in need of improvement."

We heartily wish our spirited contemporary all success in the noble work to which it has put its hand—the emancipation of the long suffering and devoted Nurses of the London Hospital.

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