

considerate person in the place, and who can only be seen at stated times, and these times *not* the most convenient for the staff.

It is quite to be expected that on every staff there will be certain fault-finding members, but it is when the majority see and feel these things that one knows there must be truth in it.

It is impossible to live in an atmosphere of tyranny or love without being affected by it.

I know, too, that a nurse is not always with the Matron, and that the sisters of wards have more direct influence upon the lives and characters of the nurses.

But are not the sisters themselves more or less influenced by the tone and manner of the Matron? It is only in cases where the love of Christ and humanity actuates the workers that they can remain in such an atmosphere without being unconsciously more or less affected by it.

Surely, then, this atmosphere—this influence—must necessarily affect the probationers, and so we get by slow and sure degrees the discourteous, selfish, consequential, although up-to-date, nurse.

Let us contrast this with another picture.

A Matron whose law of life is the love of Christ, I don't mean merely one who quotes abundantly from the Bible, but one who really tries with God's help to do justly and to love mercy; who in all the troubles, anxieties, and responsibilities of a Matron's life ever tries to be patient, just, and courteous—being human she fails sometimes, but then who more ready to remember successes and to forget the failures than her nurses, who, governed by love, love and respect in return?

A girl, such as I have already described—without any religious propensity, accustomed to going to church, to do district visiting and Sunday-school teaching maybe, but not yet more than a professing Christian—on entering the hospital, is kindly greeted by the Matron before beginning her new duties, and is told in any trouble or difficulty to come to her as the "Mother," at the same time encouraging her to remember for Whom she ought to work. Thus the work and worker are at once placed upon a higher plane.

Will not this softening influence permeate through sisters, nurses, probationers, even to ward maids and scrubbers? Will not these long years of ever looking to and striving after a high ideal act upon the girl's character and leave an indelible mark, if nothing more, in her after life? Can we not look back upon some such character and know ourselves better for the contact?

I do not for a moment wish to convey the idea that I hold the Matrons directly responsible for the misdoings of every nurse to whose certificate they have attached their names—such a responsibility would be too much for any individual—but when we find nurses as a class looked upon

as selfish, unsympathetic women, we must realise there is something wanting—something more needed than even State Registration.

We have lost the highest ideal in seeking after a higher standard of training, better conditions, and a higher rate of payment, which in the old days made women work long hours for very little pay. All these things are good, in fact necessary, but without the love of Christ, the only real motive power, our work becomes dust and ashes, and is of little worth.

It, I know, depends upon the individual, but the higher placed in the profession is that individual the greater her influence and the greater her responsibilities.

Every one influences more or less every one she comes in contact with. *How* we have influenced we may not know this side of the grave or how widespread our influence has been.

How many, then, of the Matrons who are to-day wielding this tremendous power realise how much they are responsible for the bad tone among their nurses? How many think of the effect their words and actions may have upon their staff?

This surely might well be incorporated in the aims of the Matrons' Council, that whilst working for the general welfare of the profession they might also endeavour to attain a higher standard of ethics among themselves, and that by precept, and more especially by practice, they may really improve the profession by the effects of a high standard of personal work and conduct, for the want of ethics in the modern nurse is undoubtedly traceable to the personality of the Matrons.

Legal Matters.

DRESSED IN THE GARB OF A NURSE.

Really the nursing profession seems to be becoming the refuge of the destitute. Recently the wife of a bird stuffer at Putney summoned her husband at the South Western Police Court, and asked for a separation on the ground of his neglect to provide reasonable maintenance for herself and her children. The complainant gave her evidence "dressed in the garb of a hospital nurse, in which occupation she is now earning a living," and supported her solicitor's evidence that her husband provided for household consumption, dog's meat at 2d. a pound, with salted pork and herrings, green cheese, and black bread, which were sent over by his German relations every three months. The magistrate dismissed the summons on the ground that "the quarrel was one of diet, the wife objecting to food which was agreeable to the husband's taste."

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