

and repair. She must arrange the amount of linen for each ward, and assure herself by periodic stock-taking that it is properly kept up, and is neither left unrepaired, lost, or destroyed.

Third, there is her correspondence, which is very varied, and occasionally amusing, which comes with unceasing regularity, and is no small item in the day's work.

The Matron cannot, of course, do all those things herself, and in the large hospital she will have assistants who oversee each department, but she must arrange it all in the beginning, and from time to time make such alteration in the routine as the work of the hospital demands. She must see that it is all efficiently done. She must miss no neglect, however small, and check all waste.

In the large hospitals the training school for nurses is a thing apart, and constitutes the most important, most responsible, and most arduous part of the duties. The home itself is under the care of the Superintendent, who carries out the Matron's arrangements and regulations as regards the housekeeping; the care of the nurses' bedrooms, dining rooms, bathrooms, kitchens, and, in fact, everything that has to do with a well-ordered household. The Matron inspects the home from time to time, to assure herself of its good management. It is with the nurses themselves that the Matron finds her greatest interest and responsibility. She must choose them carefully, and later reject with an unflinching hand those who she believes will not bring credit to the hospital. She must arrange a regular routine of day and night duty, see that each probationer during her term of training has a proper sequence of work. She must endeavour to send each nurse to a Sister who will be able to teach and guide her best, and she must make and enforce rules of general and special conduct. All this entails no small amount of work and worry, and the Matron finds her mind and her time fully occupied.

All Matrons present will realise at once that I have only skimmed the surface of a very deep pool. I have not touched the details of the Matron's work. Take her office work, for instance, when she is asked such questions as: Why the linen is not so well washed as usual this week, or how many rows of pins should such a ward have. Two hours daily of mental gymnastics, for before she can answer the first question she must know all about the laundry, and before she can answer the second she must know all about the work in a ward, and so on, every detail entailing many details.

There are, however, two points I should like

to touch on before I finish. These are the responsibilities of a Matron and the qualities of a Matron. The position of the Matron carries with it a full measure of responsibility. All work that is worth doing must do so. Her first duty is in the hospital, to see that its work is done effectually without waste, and with as little friction as is possible where so many human beings with so many human failings are gathered together. The responsibility which is with her night and day is the people who work under her authority, and who consciously or unconsciously look to her for guidance and example. Her aim is to develop her nurses, and to put them on the right path, so that the output at the hospital may comprise many good women, a few great women, and as few failures as possible. The probationer is what we may call the raw material, and the Matron aims at turning out the perfect, because well-taught, well-disciplined nurse. When the Matron hands the certificate of efficient work to such a nurse she feels a warm glow of satisfaction. But, alas! this is not always the result of training. We realise that the trained nurse is a very different person from the candidate of three years ago. She has, perhaps, taken the upward road and climbed, or she has taken the downward road and fallen, and the Matron asks herself if in any way she could have helped her. She has, perhaps, kicked against the pricks, being irritated and galled herself, but the Matron always feels had she known her more, had she perhaps held the reins more lightly or perhaps pulled them more tightly, she might have just given her that help that would have set her feet on the right path instead of the wrong one. The longer a Matron works the more she feels this terrible responsibility of the human lives which she may help or hinder in their way through the world.

What sort of woman should she be to undertake this life of work, or worry, and of responsibility? First, she must be a trained expert nurse, who has gone through the mill herself, and knows its trials and temptations. I am sure I only state a self-evident fact which has been proved over and over again, when I say that the first and most important point in the selection of a Matron is that she should be a trained, experienced nurse. She must possess good health, a good education, have good manners, be accustomed to mix with the world, have much self-reliance, and be trained to teach in class. She should possess a strong will, a sound judgment, a sense of justice, and of proportion, and fully realise that she will make mistakes. These she should be ready to acknowledge and rectify, for it

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