

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,055.

SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 1908.

Vol. XL.

Editorial.

THE NURSES' HOME.

A useful bit of advice given to would-be nurses by a contemporary is "inspect the Nurses' Home before filing your application." When a boy enters a public school, or when a girl goes to a boarding school it is very usual, as well as consistent with parental duty, for the parents to ask to see the sleeping accommodation provided. But it does not seem to occur to would-be probationers, or their parents, to make a similar application in regard to the Nurses' Home, and during the years we held the position of Matron at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, we do not remember one request to see the Nurses' quarters being made to us by applicants for vacancies as probationers, or their parents.

Yet the atmosphere of the Home means much to the nurse, not only as a new comer, but throughout the whole of her three years' residence. If she is a woman of refinement it is a relief to her to find that she is provided with a bedroom of her own, simple but dainty in its cleanliness; she takes a pride forthwith in keeping it spotless, and it becomes to her a harbour of refuge and quiet during spare moments off duty, when she is not out of doors. To a probationer who may not have been accustomed to the same standard of cleanliness and order, her room, when she enters the Nurses' Home, immediately acts as an educative influence, and, if she is of the material of which good nurses are made, she quickly responds to the demand it makes upon her for neatness and scrupulous cleanliness, thereby gaining almost unconsciously a knowledge of the standard which a patient may reasonably demand of her when she goes out private nursing, in the nursing order of a bedroom.

Again, if a Nurses' Home is not provided with a liberal supply of bathrooms, how can nurses practise what they are expected to preach as to standards of personal cleanliness? It is true that the woman to whom thorough daily ablutions have become a matter of in-

stinct and necessity will contrive in the face of all difficulties to keep up the practice, but such difficulties should not exist for her in a modern Nurses' Home. One London Hospital—St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington—provides for its nurses not only adequate bath room accommodation, but facilities for shampooing their heads, a logical sequence when the importance of washing the hair frequently, thoroughly, and always after attendance on a doubtful case, is impressed upon probationers.

Everyone realises the impression made by home life for good or ill. The home is ideally the cradle of modesty, refinement, and self-respect, and throughout life those who have had the benefit of upbringing in a home where these virtues were practised and taught feel its influence. The same applies to the influence of a Nurses' Home in the life of a Nurse. It cannot fail to be an elevating, inspiring, educative influence with succeeding generations of probationers, or the exact contrary. If meals are coarse and ill served, probationers housed two and three in a room, baths obtainable with difficulty, and bedrooms ill kept, it must have an undesirable effect upon all but the strongest characters. It, therefore, behoves all those who are responsible for nurse training schools to see that the surroundings of the pupils in the Home are such as will preserve or inculcate habits of personal refinement which—desirable in all—are essential in a good nurse.

No one whose memory of Nurses' Homes connected with hospitals and infirmaries carries her back over the last quarter of a century can fail to realise how much consideration has been given of recent years to the nurses' quarters by Committees and Boards of Guardians. It is quite usual to find that each nurse has a bedroom to herself, and that pleasant and comfortably furnished sitting rooms are arranged for the use of the nursing staff. Indeed, so marked is the general improvement that one sometimes hears a doubt expressed as to whether the comfort enjoyed by many modern nurses is as good a preparation for private nursing as the Spartan conditions prevalent in former days.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)