

tain extent why the whole plan of ward discipline is necessary, why such a mode of treatment is pursued in your case; but think, rather, what you would feel if you were, for example, an ignorant, cunning woman, the outcome of a life alternating between hysterical emotion, and drunken brutality, underfed, overworked, who has coaxed and sworn her way through life, and then only will you understand the distrust with which she regards her surroundings, the sort of deep-rooted feeling that she will be cheated, if she does not look out; you will appreciate the half-defiant, half-cowed manner; and you will beware equally of harshness and weakness. You will find that if she once grasps the fact that your kindness to her springs from true sympathy *with* her sufferings, and self-forgetfulness, she will respect and obey you if you are firm, but will probably despise you, if you are weak, and easily taken in. For a Nurse should not have that soft, jelly-fish kind of character, that makes her unable to contradict a patient for his, or her own, good. There are, it is true, different ways of saying No; but let no one suppose, because they are too lazy, or too timid, to enforce discipline, that they are, therefore, sympathetic and loving, and do so for their patient's sake. Let the Nurse not lay the flattering unction to her soul, that she does not interfere, when she sees the men enjoying some forbidden luxury, because "they looked so happy." Nonsense, it was because she was afraid to speak. Patients are quick enough to notice when a Nurse is selfish, and when her sympathy is genuine—much quicker than the Nurses often think.

I met an old woman once who had been an in-patient at one of our large London hospitals, and who told me how the young "lady Nurse" was very kind as soon as the "gentlemen" came into the ward; but when they were away, you might call and call her, and she took no notice. "I soon took her measure," she added, shrewdly.

Never, however, pretend to a feeling that is not genuine. If you are not really in sympathy with your patients or their friends, do not pretend to be so. In speaking to a patient's friends, if you are really sorry—there is no reason why you should not be—let them see it; but if you do not feel particularly sympathetic with the case, be courteous, kind, and considerate, but do not express a sympathy you do not feel.

A Nurse should never condemn a patient, because of his past life; it is not her province. However bad he may have been; however much of what she has heard of his past history may grate upon her, she should never allow it to influence her treatment of him. Now that he is down, he has a claim upon her kindness and compassion. She is not there to sit in judgment upon him, nor to criticise his past career, but to tend him in his sickness.

Nor should a Nurse ever let her patient feel that

he is dull, and uninteresting; nor let him see how anxious she is, to finish washing him, and making his bed, and go on to a more important case. There is a natural and harmless vanity in a sick man, which always leads him to regard *his* case as one of supreme importance, and which it is quite unnecessary to wound.

An infirmity doctor once said to me, "When I have time, I make it a rule to take a long time going round the old women's ward. I can't do much for many of them; but I listen very attentively, while they tell me all about their aches and pains, real and imaginary, and they are ever so much better afterwards." That doctor had a clear sympathy with the mind of an old lady, tormented with all the aches and pains of senility, and the intense relief of being able to pour forth all her troubles into the sympathetic ear of someone who understood them.

Oh, sympathy! If we classified all Nurses with regard to their personal sympathy with their patients, many a good "doctor's Nurse" would take a low place.

The root of all the highest and truest sympathy, is pure love, the noblest of all human qualities, and yet hardly to be ranked as one. For the true and honest love of humanity, in its highest sense, is as a vast reservoir, from which all the streams of compassion, sympathy, and kindness to others are fed. To those characters that possess it, it is the vast background, and overarch which the sky forms for the earth, overarching all their life—the background upon which all their acts are set. It underlies the actions of their being, as an organ sounds through the voices of a choir; it is the keynote to their existence; for, as Jean Paul says, "The blue heavens are higher than all clouds, and more lasting;" and so, whatever be the clouds that sweep across such a character, love will shine out clear above and through all.

Nothing will fail to interest you; nothing but will appeal to you, if you have that wonderful and most glorious of all human gifts—the power of enjoying happiness in others, of suffering, it is true, when others suffer, of grieving when others fail, but of entering keenly into their joys. Every act of kindness you perform, will be pleasant to you; every step of your way—rough, hard, or smooth—will be glad and bright, with the unselfish happiness that is born of the happiness of others. "*Homo sum, humani nil a mihi alienum puto.*"

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