

and trades, both for men and women, that knowledge and experience cannot be obtained without its being paid for, both in time and money, and the day may come, although it would be a sad one, when women will have to pay for the benefit of a good certificate as a Professional Nurse, just as her sisters have to pay for certificates, or their equivalents, to practise medicine, and to teach. It must not be forgotten that the improved Nursing of our sick poor in Hospitals is becoming year by year a more expensive item in Hospital management, and as the advantages offered to Probationers become still more complete, the authorities may find it necessary to exact payment for the same.

The Staff Nurse has been aptly described as the right hand of the Sister. So true is this, that it is not infrequently the case, although it is much to be deprecated, that where a Sister is of a somewhat pliable disposition, she may come in time to rely rather too implicitly upon this ever ready, kindly hand, and thus fail to maintain the right degree of discipline in her Ward, to its ultimate deterioration. I would, therefore, warn my younger fellow-Sisters of this failing, as it is the cause of much natural discontent and dissatisfaction amongst the subordinate Nurses, who naturally resent a divided authority in the Ward. For this reason, all *hob-nobbing* with those over whom she has to maintain control should be avoided by a Sister; tact and sympathy is all that is required, to remain on the happiest terms with them. Where the subordinates, when off duty, are invited to loll about and feed in the Sister's room, and become, in consequence, on terms of familiarity with her, and where she is in the habit of displaying the same ease of manner in the kitchen, she fails to maintain the dignity of her *official position*, and, in consequence, fails to perform a part of her duty.

The duties of the Staff Nurse are easy to define, and are exceedingly responsible, as she so often becomes the representative of another person, and will for that reason feel doubly anxious that, in the absence of that person, no possible cause for complaint shall occur.

According to the little table attached to this paper, she will come on duty at 7 a.m., and will at once, with the help of a junior Probationer, begin to make the patients' beds, imparting items of knowledge by the way. Probationers one and two will begin the same process at the opposite bed, so that the Staff Nurse can keep her eye upon them, and offer her experienced assistance if necessary. Bed-making is simple, but requires care. A comfortably padded wheel chair covered with an ample supply of blankets, must be removed from bed to bed, in which all patients who are per-

mitted to get up to have their beds made should be placed. Beds should always (especially if the sick person may not be removed out of it) be made by two persons; it is the quickest and least exhaustive method, both for patient and Nurse, and in many cases it is absolutely dangerous for one woman to attempt to move the patient.

A word here about simple bed-making, of which the Staff Nurse should be the presiding genius, will not be out of place.

First having carefully placed the patient in the comfortable chair, and wrapped the blankets round him, the bed-clothes and pillows should all be placed on a second chair (not cast on to the dusty floor), and thoroughly shaken, the mattress should be turned over (the bedstead dusted with a hand-brush), and on alternate days turned from top to bottom, or from side to side—by this means its uniform flatness will be preserved for a much longer period than if the weight of the patient presses on the same spot for any length of time. On sheet-changing mornings (and if possible, each patient should be allowed two top sheets and pillow cases a week), the bottom sheet being always removed, is replaced by the less soiled top sheet. In distributing the sheets the utmost possible care should be taken that the older stock of linen only should be used for any bad cases likely by discharges or dressings to injure them, as in cases of burns and skin diseases, where all the limbs may be encased in greasy dressings, a draw-sheet and mackintosh are of course of no avail in protecting the top bed-covering. And it is indeed grievous to observe the gross carelessness displayed by many women considered excellent Nurses, in this homely yet important duty.

A regular, sufficient supply of Ward linen should be sent from the linenry, marked with the name of the Ward to which it is sent every week, having previously been thoroughly repaired, if necessary, and well aired. This is the only method of ensuring that the best possible care is taken of it, as in the male Wards great difficulty arises about turning and mending sheets, darning blankets, &c., and in consequence great neglect often occurs; in the women's Wards the same difficulty may not always arise, but patching and mending and untidy litters are in consequence permitted at hours when all should be neat and presentable.

In making the patients' beds, the Nurses will take with them a supply of rectified spirit of wine and pasma powder (equal quantities of starch and oxide of zinc), with which each patient's back and hips should be gently rubbed and powdered, after they have been washed with soap and warm water, and most carefully dried. Such serious cases as the Night Nurses have been unable to wash, will now be washed by the Day Nurses, each

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)