

elements of punishment, and should be used, not to uphold the individual power of the Sister, but to foster the obedience which, on the part of the subordinate, is the attitude of mind which by recognising authority acknowledges also the *relations* of life and duty.

This, then, is what I would insist on as the foundation of a Sister's work—a right conception of her relation to others. The wider the sphere of work the wider the sphere of influence and responsibility, and the greater necessity for recognising the fact that no one stands alone; but that each has a duty to the other, and that this descends to the smallest detail of work and behaviour. One constantly sees in Hospital wards Sisters and Nurses who are more or less indulging in the spirit of opposition to rule. Take the one point of dress. Instead of entering into the spirit and teaching of uniform, and showing the Nurses under them what it means, one too often notes little protests against uniformity—little additions, extra ornaments, &c. As I have often before pleaded with Nurses, I would say again, Take your dress as a means of expressing the harmony of your mind with your work, and content yourselves that "What is fit is fair."

Having laid a good foundation by getting at the root idea of authority, let us next consider the exercise of it in the teaching and management of Probationers. First, what are the most frequent sources of failure? There is the newly-promoted Sister, an excellent Nurse. How difficult she finds it to keep her own hands off the work, to keep her patience with the bungling novice! In fact, to impart to her Probationers what she knows so well herself, and to gauge the depth of ignorance in another mind. Without such measurement no one can ever teach. But perhaps I take too much for granted, perhaps I should first insist that a Sister must teach with method and system, that it is a serious part of her duty, and one she is responsible to the whole Nursing profession to fulfil. Supposing she does understand, and suppose she wishes to train in the best and fullest sense her under Nurses, why is it that success does not always crown her efforts? I think one reason is that it often happens in the stress and anxiety of Hospital work the Sister fails to give sufficient weight to the consideration of the distribution of work. What a Probationer does quickly and well it is often convenient to let her do; but I venture to think that what the Probationer needs is to be taught to do the things she shows *no* aptitude for. It is only human nature to wish to do what we can do best, and to slide past the things that are distasteful. The Probationer who has proved herself reliable is given responsibility, but the girl who is shy and diffident is apt to remain so, instead of being

trained to bear responsibility. Again, when a Probationer has mastered the routine, is not the Sister very apt to relax her attention to the perfection of details and finish? Probationers are not, however, all a Sister's care. She has to learn to deal with a great variety of character in the Staff Nurses and lady Probationers who pass through her ward; and here I would urge one point, the great necessity of getting into the ward a tone of courtesy and good manners. Of course, the best method of such teaching is *example*. Both Sisters and Nurses must feel kindly before they can speak gently, both must be unselfish before they can show true courtesy. We are all so busy in Hospital. There is no time. "No time" is the cry everywhere. I have lately had a good deal to do with one of the busiest people in England, and I have been immensely impressed by the fact that I have never once detected a shade of hurry in his manner. Diligence, forethought and method make the cure for the terrible evil of hurry. Unfailing courtesy is one of the best weapons in dealing with difficult people. Perhaps one of the most trying persons to deal with is the Nurse who has no ideal, and who cannot seemingly be roused to take any pleasure in perfecting her work. Sometimes she may be lazy, sometimes she may be disloyal. Alas, faults are seldom isolated; and the Sister has to struggle not only with badly done work, but she has to contend against an undercurrent of opposition. In her fitful attempts at keeping order in the ward, the Nurse undermines the Sister's influence by making her a kind of bugbear, instead of exercising her own strength of will to uphold the order and discipline she knows to be right. Or perhaps things are done quite differently when the Sister is off duty. Such a character is difficult to deal with. The Sister knows far more than she can speak of, and such a person is not easily influenced by the highest motives. It is perhaps better to begin with the lower, and point out to the Nurse her professional failure, and try as time goes on to win her to a higher standard and ideal.

The capacity for so training Probationers, and for wisely dealing with various characters, presupposes in the Sister a well trained and disciplined mind—and a controlled nature, yet one of deep sympathies. This perhaps is the point I would urge most strongly, that Sisters be chosen not only for their excellence in ward work, but for that higher moral force and excellence which will fit them to rule and influence their subordinates wisely, and for their highest good; on the women who are so chosen, I would urge that they consider and face bravely the width and extent of the responsibility laid upon them, recognising their true *relation* to those who are under their authority.

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