

tion, with vomiting. Bleeding may also occur from the tearing of a vein or artery. This must be watched for, and, should blood appear in the urine, the fact must be reported immediately to the Surgeon.

Cases of this kind should be placed on firm, well-filled mattresses, with the head slightly raised—better no pillow than one that is too high.

There are also cases in which an ever vigilant watch must be kept up, or the terrible bedsores will inevitably make its appearance.\*

### THE MATRON.

*Being a Paper read before the British Nurses' Association, on February 15, 1889,*

By MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK.

IT has been said by one who was a deep thinker, as well as a great poet, that—

“ We make the world we live in, and we weave  
About us webs of good or ill, which leave  
Their impress on our souls, and on the lives  
Of others ”;

I venture to believe that it will be admitted that few women are entrusted with so much responsibility and authority, and such power therefore of influencing the comfort, the happiness, and even the ultimate usefulness of many fellow-creatures, as the Matrons of Hospitals. And although it might at first sight appear to be a somewhat personal subject to bring before this Association, I trust I need make no apology for so doing, because, from some personal experience, I feel strongly that the remedies for many of the troubles, the anxieties, and the disappointments with which Matrons are beset in the performance of their duties, rest in their own hands. To explain my meaning it will perhaps be best to describe the characteristics which it appears to me that a Matron ought to possess, the position which she ought to hold, the powers with which she should be entrusted, and the duties which she should fulfil. There is no need to paint an ideal picture of what the Matron should be in mind and character; for it is well known to many of us by personal experience that there are women in our midst, and occupying that position, who in every way seem to exemplify the beautiful description given in that wonderful

\* Before I finish my remarks on the bones, I must mention a disease to which they are subject, and with which, as Nurses, you will probably have a great deal to do. *Necrosis* literally means mortification. A form of disease closely resembling it is called *caries*. It is, in fact, the decay or death of part of a bone, smaller or larger, as the case may be. Sometimes this is the result of an injury; more often it is the result of disease. Generally speaking, the necrosed bone is excised by the Surgeon, and the decayed portion being removed, the wound heals up, but occasionally when the disease is of long standing, or involves a large part of the bone, it becomes necessary to amputate the affected limb.

epitome of wisdom—the Book of Proverbs—of the good mother. “Strength and honour are her clothing. She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. She perceiveth that her merchandise is good; her candle goeth not out by night.”

I presume that there can be no dispute that the Matron of a Hospital ought to carry out, in the fullest sense, the meaning of her title, and be in very deed and truth the Mother of the household—the Mother, not only of her Nurses, but also of the sick within the Wards. To these the Hospital should be as a home, and they should ever feel that they are regarded as its children who urgently require aid and comfort; not that they are admitted to its shelter as aliens, and treated and nursed merely as “cases.” I have no hesitation in saying that their impressions and expressions upon this matter, and consequently the public estimation in which the Hospital will be held, depend in a great measure upon the example and the precepts of the Matron. She should certainly and strongly deprecate the habit into which some Nurses seem almost naturally to fall—of looking at a patient solely from a scientific point of view, as though, in fact, he were a personified disease, and not a fellow-creature. She should, on the other hand, enforce upon her staff the importance of considerate kindness and loving devotion to their charges, as strongly as the necessity for perfect exactitude in the performance of every detail in their work.

It follows, therefore, that a woman, who desires to fill the post of Matron satisfactorily, should possess wide and tender sympathies, but be not wanting withal in the moral courage to place her duty before her personal feelings; should be able to enforce the most perfect discipline, not by harshness nor wanton neglect of the feelings of her fellow-workers, but by punctilious observance of the rules of her own office, and the most inflexible justice, tempered by mercy and discretion, in enforcing a similar obedience upon the part of her subordinates. She should possess the grace of true courtesy, and the refinement of culture and education. Her appearance certainly should command respect and confidence—for an example to her Nurses in all else, surely she should be such in manner and apparel—avoiding, on the one hand, the innate vulgarity of gorgeous attire, or the slovenliness of untidy dress—both equally unseemly—and, on the other, all loud and public fault-finding. Her staff should be proud of “our Matron,” and should acknowledge her their leader by the force of her personality, and not merely because of her position.

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