

Dictionary of Medicine," on Hospital administration. "The Nursing establishment cannot be made responsible on the side of discipline to the Medical Officers or the Governors of a Hospital. Simplicity of rules, placing the Nurse, in all matters regarding management of the sick, absolutely under the orders of the Medical Staff, and in all disciplinarian matters absolutely under the Lady Superintendent, or Matron—to whom the Medical Officers should refer all cases of neglect—is very important. Any remission or neglect of duty is as much a breach of discipline as drunkenness or other bad conduct, and can only be dealt with to any good purpose by report to the Matron. But neither the Medical Officer, nor any other male head, should ever have the power to punish for disobedience. His duty should end with reporting the case to the female head, who is responsible to the governing authority of the Hospital, as all her Nurses and servants are, in the performance of their duties, immediately responsible to the Matron only. If the Matron or Lady Superintendent does not exercise the authority entrusted to her with judgment and discretion, it is then the legitimate province of the governing body to interfere and remove her."

The Matron should, then, be the sole and responsible head of the female staff. I take it, this should have several good results. It naturally should make her very jealous of the good name and fame of the Hospital. So that she should, for instance, never be led by mere good nature to countenance any lax administration. The history of Hospitals has often proved that deplorable results are apt to arise through miscalled kindness and trust—which being interpreted, signifies a lack of energy and sense of duty—on the Matron's part. However trustworthy her subordinates may be—and it is better to allow them to feel fully responsible for their own departments—the Matron should never forget that she, in her turn, is personally responsible to the Governors of the Hospital and the public for their efficiency and conduct in every particular; and she should therefore undoubtedly make herself thoroughly acquainted with, and keep herself fully informed of, all the details of their work. She should, as far as possible, see with her own eyes all faults and shortcomings, and judge them with her own judgment. Personal supervision on the part of the Matron is always more valuable than vicarious oversight. Dirt, untidiness, and disobedience will always be more satisfactorily reprov'd or prevented if their presence attracts her own direct observation than if she has merely learnt of them from the reports of others. It is the duty of her subordinate officers, and one that should never be evaded, to report on any breach of discipline or any incompetence among the Nurses or servants; but the Matron should save

them as far as possible from the odium of tale-bearing, or the ill-feeling that is so easily developed by so-called tittle-tattling, by herself personally noticing, and as far as possible correcting, the mistakes and shortcomings of those under her direction. The law of England demands that every man should be considered honest until he be proved a rogue, and it surely would be well if the Matron acted in that sense and spirit. Thus having judiciously and wisely selected her subordinates, let her trust them to the utmost, for trust begets honour, and honesty, and loyalty, that is certainly far better than mere eye-service. Let her superintend and supervise all the work and behaviour of her Staff, and let them feel that she does so, because she knows herself to be personally responsible for their acts. But a system of spying, which encourages tale-bearing and mendacity, leads to endless misunderstandings, heart burnings, and misery, and will always be resented by high-minded women. The great importance, therefore, of her undisputed control over the entire female staff is shown by the fact that, where she is not answerable for their conduct and work, evils on both sides are apt to occur. On the Matron's side, the lack of personal responsibility is apt to engender a want of interest in them, for work for which you are *not*, cannot possibly appeal to you in the same manner as that for which you *are*, directly responsible. On the Nurses' side, they cease to look on the Matron as their Mother, as the channel through which everything reaches them; and that feeling once destroyed, the very intimate relation that should exist between them ceases, the hold she should have over them slackens, and the bands of discipline loosen and fall away. Any arrangement by which the Matron shares her then impotent authority, or is hampered in her work by constant reference to others, leads to continual and galling friction, and makes the position irksome, and even in a short time untenable, to any gentleman.

To the Medical Staff the Matron should be responsible for the efficient Nursing of the patients. Nothing could be more ridiculous, and even more wrong, than the—now nearly obsolete—feeling, that when the Physician or Surgeon comes into the Ward, it is the Matron's duty at once to walk out, as if she had not, and could not have, the slightest interest or concern in their presence there, or the manner in which the Nurses performed their duty towards them. No department of the Hospital in which her subordinates work should be closed to the Matron; at no time should they ever feel as if her presence were an intrusion they had a right to resent. Her place, I venture to repeat, is at the head of the female staff; and that position, and its necessary results, should be undoubtedly and courteously accorded to her.

(To be concluded in our next.)

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