

Now I have arrived at the end of my task, and there is still much—very much—I might have said with regard to the details of a Matron's duties; but in that case I must have claimed your kind attention for hours, not for minutes. I have therefore contented myself with merely touching on those points upon which I was anxious to express my opinions sufficiently clearly to elicit those of others.

There is no position I consider which more strongly taxes the highest, noblest and most enduring qualities of a woman than that of a Matron to a Hospital. The responsibility for the Nursing and domestic comfort of the sick, the management of a large staff of women in their home life, and the arrangement of their work and relations to the Surgical staff and patients, calls for her continual exercise of tact and discretion, combined with the greatest firmness. She has to act as an example to her Nurses that they shall be proud to follow, represent them as their head in a fit and becoming manner, be a clear-headed woman of business, and ever keep a warm heart and large sympathies.

No one in the whole community of Nurses needs more than the Matron to bear in mind the Motto of our Association, and be ever "Steadfast and True" in loyalty, purity, and courage,

"Souls tempered with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good,
Helpers and friends of mankind."

NURSING ECHOES.

*** Communications (duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith) are especially invited for these columns.*

MR. EDITOR asks me to insert here an abstract of the discussion which took place after the reading of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick's paper, as he is not able to find space for a verbatim report. I saw the representatives of several papers taking notes. Miss Furley, who is connected with a paper which never loses an opportunity of criticising the British Nurses' Association, was very busy with her pencil, so that we may expect to hear the views of an "esteemed correspondent." There is a capital account of the meeting, I notice, in this week's *Queen*.

MR. BRUDENELL CARTER said that, as was well known to most of those present, they were largely indebted to Mrs. Bedford Fenwick for the formation of the Association, but to this debt she had largely added, by the paper which she had just read. Mrs. Bedford Fenwick had told

them many of the qualities of "The Matron," but there was something more, a something which is incommunicable—the peculiar touch, as it were, of a great artist. Mr. Carter said he hoped to hear some Nurses' views on the subject, to see how they differed from the Matrons'. He quite agreed with Mrs. Fenwick that there was a necessity to avoid worry, but he wished she had told them how it was to be done. For his part he should advise all to have some mental task or other hobby, to which weary minds might turn and forget, or at all events seek to forget, their troubles. Mr. Carter then asked the ladies present to discuss the subject of the paper.

MISS MOLLETT said that she had nothing whatever to add, that she quite agreed with Mrs. Fenwick's paper on every point, and that she could not discuss it, because she had nothing whatever to say that had not already been said. Many troubles of a Matron arose from indiscreet interference with other officials, but she did not think it was possible to get rid of worry either with study, or without it.

MISS HOMERSHAM said that Mrs. Fenwick had painted such an ideal woman, that it would be impossible to find a flaw in her. But at the same time, the Matron of a large Hospital differs from the Matron of a small one. The Matron of a large Hospital often has more authority than she should, and more to do than she can properly carry out. Those they employ should know to whom they are responsible. If a Nurse has a grievance against a Matron, she is told to appeal to the House Committee, and if she does so she does not always come off very well. Women often enter into the Hospitals as Probationers when they are middle-aged, and then have to go through, and are taught, things which they knew years before; then there are arbitrary rules laid down, and she thought it would be far better to place Nurses on their word of honour than to have these minute regulations. Probationers are often treated by the Matrons as children, and moreover as very naughty children. (Laughter.)

MISS GRAHAM said that she would like to say a few words, and that she quite agreed with Miss Homersham in the latter part of her remarks. She, herself, had entered as a Probationer when she was rather past middle-age, and she found the petty rules very harassing. (Much laughter.)

MISS HELEN FOGGO-THOMSON said that, as she was a provincial Nurse, she did not know much of the Matrons of London Hospitals, but she

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)