

My First Matron.

WHAT a fine antidote to journalistic neurasthenia is the frank friend! My frank friend remarked to me of late, "Now my dear Editor, if you will descend occasionally from the 'hill tops,' and deal with us nurses as we are—and you know we are just ordinary women after all—our RECORD will be even more popular than it is. People *are* so much more interesting than programmes. Tell us something about your matrons."

The majority of probationers speak of "Matron" in the tone and person singular, and in this I find instinctive loyalty. There is but one Matron, and the Probationer is her prophet! I often wonder when a male Committee meets together to select the Head of a Nurse Training School, if they quite appreciate the true significance of their selection to future generations of trained nurses. Like master like man—

does not the old saying apply with force in the nursing world—like matron like nurse? We may affect to deny the fact, but it is true, nevertheless, that the example and influence of the woman dominating the domestic department of a hospital (and in fact nursing is a domestic science) makes or mars the reputation of that hospital. Neither genius for political economy on the part of the secretary, nor a well-renowned reputation for science on the part of the medical staff, can effect the

popularity and success of a hospital, if the domestic department is mismanaged. It is incontrovertible that the popularity of a hospital in the estimation of the patients, and relatively in the minds of the public, is largely estimated by personal comfort, and the personal comfort of the patients depends upon the nursing staff. I have been watching the ups and downs of hospitals in public estimation for the past twenty

years, and I have formed the opinion that the personality of the matron is of vital importance to the body politic.

What a nurse owes in gratitude, or in grudge, to the Head of the Nursing School in which she enters for training, I leave each nurse to define for herself. Personally, I owe a debt of gratitude which I can never repay, that my respect was commanded by the three women, under whom I worked as probationer, nurse, and sister.

It is just twenty years ago, to-day, the 1st of April, 1878, since I

entered the Children's Hospital, Nottingham, as a probationer, since when I can honestly say, no concern in life has superseded my enthusiastic interest in all which appertains to the efficient nursing of the sick, and, in consequence, to the organization and efficient discipline of the nursing profession.

What trained nurse ever forgets the impression of her first visit to a hospital ward? I remember



MISS MARGARET MINKS,

Lady Superintendent, Children's Hospital, Nottingham, 1877-1878.

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