

duties, undoubtedly, become wider as your influence is greater. You are consciously, or unconsciously, a pattern by which others fashion themselves, and, just as you acknowledge or repudiate your wider professional duties, others will acknowledge or repudiate theirs. Therefore, willingly, or unwillingly, you have often to face questions and situations you would rather leave alone, and it behoves you to act towards public as well as private duties as your conscience teaches you is right. If nursing is to progress, not retrogress, if we are to hand to our successors something of the pride in our work and calling we have inherited, we must not, whilst fulfilling the daily and unquestioned duties of our life forget what we owe to the management and government of the profession generally.

There is hardly a single trade, profession or calling that has attained to any standing, or any lasting success, that has not founded some organization, or made some arrangement by which the members themselves regulate their purely personal and professional matters for their own benefit. Regulating their affairs briefly on lines that they know and appreciate, and for objects they desire. Now, in all these organisations, those, who through energy, or by good fortune, hold prominent positions, devote some portion of their time and money to aiding and furthering the welfare of their fellow-workers. Such associations have always been found to be immensely helpful to good work and progression; the union of individuals has furthered the interests of the community, and the knowledge of a few has become the knowledge of all, like the woodman's bundle of sticks, one has stiffened the other.

It is beyond all question the duty of a Matron—of all Matrons—to further, by all means in their power, the professional unity upon which the future of our profession depends, and the independence of the profession in purely personal matters, which alone can give that unity dignity. This, I take it, is the object of the Matrons' Council.

But these few pages would not be complete if I did not touch upon the details, familiar as they are to most of us, by which each Matron can further the interests of her profession—do her duty by it in her own particular sphere. Perhaps no more important step was ever taken by any association than the official recognition of the three years' standard of training for nurses by the Royal British Nurses' Association, and the necessity for their registration by a body outside and independent of individual training schools, and for that step the Matrons who were then members were mainly responsible. This official recognition took place years ago. But, in how many general hospitals and infirmaries do we not still find two, or one year's training in vogue? I cannot help thinking that with a little more firm-

ness on the part of the Matrons of these hospitals the three years' system might be introduced. Certainly one of the first duties of a Matron to her profession is to strive to introduce the three years' system into her own domain, in justice both to her patients and probationers.

Further, that Matron is not doing her duty to her profession who does not combat those false notions of economy held by some Committees where efficiency in nursing is sacrificed to cheapness. And no Matron is doing her duty to her profession who does not take care that the future nurses, sisters, and Matrons who are under her special charge, are really being trained in the wards, not merely acting as assistant nurses, but regarded as pupils, as probationers.

Lastly, perhaps I need hardly mention the duty of a Matron to do all she can for the personal and bodily comfort and welfare of her nursing staff. I do not advocate superfluous luxury, because that is always out of place in a working institution—most of all in a charitable institution, but cleanliness, refinement, and cubic space are absolutely essential. But there are some amongst us who are not yet satisfied with the position that nurses hold generally, and who are determined that the uncertainty and ambiguity of their position shall ultimately cease, and that a trained nurse shall be a definite quantity. We are fully determined that, in the future, the public shall know as precisely what is meant by a trained nurse, as what is meant by a qualified medical man; and the nurse's right to her title, free from the intrusion of unqualified women, shall be as unquestioned as his. If we hold our profession together there is no doubt but that we shall succeed, and the unity and good fellowship of the profession depend largely upon the interest and unselfish example set by the Matrons."

DISCUSSION.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick (London) said every Matron present must heartily agree with the sentiments of Miss Mollett's admirable paper. In the past, hospital Matrons were so fully occupied in organizing the nursing departments of the hospitals, that they had little or no time to spare to work in the wider field of nursing politics. But owing to the arduous and self-sacrificing labours of hospital Matrons in the past, their departments were now so far organized that no further advance could be made until Matrons co-operated for purposes of discussing the best methods of action. Mrs. Fenwick considered that the position of a hospital Matron carried with it high responsibilities which should not be undervalued, and should not be shirked. One great question to be decided was whether nursing was to remain merely a domestic employment for women or whether, by accepting a complete curriculum of practical and theoretical education, nursing was to be raised into a skilled and scientific profession worthy of legal status, and thus a line of demarcation defined between skilled and unskilled workers. The silly assertions, that a thorough nursing education made nurses insubordinate in their relations to medical men, were

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