

You see that I place discipline first in the factors which go to make a good nurse, and of the three divisions of discipline I give first place in results to the discipline exercised by one's fellow nurses. They influence each other in a way, we, who are in authority, can never do. They maintain the tone of the hospital, and the *esprit de corps*, which helps in so great a way to make the training successful or not. Rules are good, but to be so they must be wide and binding, yet administered in the understanding that rules are made for nurses, not nurses for rules. Authority is good, if it is not too much, and given gradually as the nurse shows she can exercise it; but the moulding, the polishing, and the finishing touches are done by the nurses themselves.

Two points rise out of this—first, the difficulty of obtaining this training in any but a large hospital, where the staff are sufficiently numerous, well disciplined, and of at least the average intelligence to create and maintain this influence. The second is the difficulty in estimating the results for an examination, and the impossibility of anyone doing so who is not working with the nurse at the time. The danger of the present training of nurses is the over estimating the value of merely theoretic knowledge, learnt easily from books, and so easily estimated, and the undervaluing the formation of character, which, to my mind, is the really valuable result of the three years of hard work.

Speaking of small hospitals, yesterday, a lady said to me that the Matron of some small hospital was so good to her probationers, she made it just like home; and that this was the case with many of the Matrons of small hospitals. Now that is very nice, but when the nurse has finished her training, she goes out into the world to exercise a profession, by no means without its dangers, unarmed for the battle. She has faced no difficulties, she has had them all cleared out of her path. She has had no severe criticism, she has exercised no authority. She has been taught no reserve, and is very apt to be over confident. She has not touched her limits, and therefore does not know they are there. The nurses trained in the large hospitals are by no means perfect; but they have at least acquired the habit of obedience, the power to meet difficulties, and, unless their vanity is very deep rooted, and their intelligence small, a fair idea of the estimation in which they are held by their fellows.

As to the second difficulty, I may not touch on it. I mention it merely as a suggestion for future thought. We Matrons will have to face it some day, and I just suggest the difficulties I see for your consideration.

DISCUSSION.

MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK (London), in opening the discussion, said she thought the majority of those present realized the value of discipline in training; there could be no training of any value without it. With the exception of women under-graduates, trained nurses were the only professional women who had the opportunity of living in community, and therefore of finding their own level. Men and boys found this level in the course of their general education, but many probationers came to hospital with no preparation for a life guided by the inevitable discipline to which they had to submit. The tendency in training of late years had been to shirk discipline, what the nurses called to "break down barriers." She felt strongly that official barriers should be maintained; from personal experience in the Training Schools she was convinced that discipline, which was quite another thing from petty tyranny, was the most valuable factor in the training of nurses. Where discipline had been relaxed, it did not seem to her that the Training School had turned out such valuable nurses.

MISS E. PELL-SMITH (Leicester) thought it most disastrous that discipline in training should be relaxed. It seemed to her that there was too much petting and cossetting of nurses now, they had heard yesterday the old system of educating nurses compared to dropping a dog over a bridge into the stream, and letting it sink or swim as it was inclined. Personally, she thought it would be a good thing if some of the dogs never came to shore. Nurses were so much pampered now-a-days that many who were totally unsuited and not strong enough for nursing got through their training, who formerly would have fallen out by the way, and it was these women who swelled the ranks of the incapable, and did much to injure the tone and standard of the profession.

MISS WINGFIELD (Macclesfield) considered discipline an excellent thing, and its effect would show in a trained nurse's future work when she was left to herself. The discipline of conscientiousness, and of obedience to detail in the very smallest matter, would help nurses afterwards when they were on their own account, and had to judge for themselves, both in district and private work.

MISS TODD (Bournemouth) was of opinion that if special hospitals were allowed to take their proper position in the curriculum of training nurses, the difficulty would be lessened. Special hospitals did not pretend to train nurses completely, they could only train them in certain subjects to make them efficient. She would remind the Council how inefficient a nurse was

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