

Miss Palmer's duties, to other hands, but what Miss Palmer we believe wished to make clear was that she takes the position of head of the domestic department, as any lady does in her own house. This is as it should be, and in this capacity the Matron of a hospital is entitled to the courtesy and consideration accorded to the mistress of a household. With regard to the treatment of the patients the medical officers are of course supreme. This cannot be questioned, and if they take their stand upon this point they are in an unassailable position. But with regard to the domestic management we really must be excused for saying that it is manifestly absurd for a medical man to attempt to control the domestic department in conjunction with his own duties. He has had no experience in the management of a household, and in his own home his mother would probably smile at the suggestion that he should take over the control of even a small household. This being so the resident medical officers in hospitals, would do well to recognise that the domestic department is the province of the Matron, and to concede to her that courtesy and deference in its management which they expect accorded to them in their own. What we are pleading for is the ready recognition of the Matron's position as the lady of the house, and for the support for her in this capacity which she has a right to expect, and without which her office is made unnecessarily difficult. For instance, supposing for any reason a house surgeon wants his dinner at an unusual hour, it is certainly due to the Matron that he should ask her to arrange for it instead of issuing an order to the maid who waits on him, so upsetting the household arrangements. If he desires to make any comment on the food supplied to him he should do so to the Matron, who is the proper person to deal with the complaint, instead of sending a message to the cook, or even interviewing that functionary himself. These may be little matters, but it is courtesy in small matters that makes the wheels of an institution run smoothly, and is the best preventative of friction. It was in this sense that Miss Mollett, in replying to the points raised by various speakers in discussing her valuable paper, remarked that "a good deal of difficulty would be done away with if the Matron were really recognised as the head of the house," and we cordially agree with her.

Our remarks do not apply to the large hospitals, where the different departments are necessarily defined, and where consequently

there is no danger of friction, but to the smaller hospitals, such as special ones, and to many provincial hospitals where the heads of the different departments are brought into closer communication.

NOBLESSE OBLIGE.

WE gather from the annual report of the Nightingale Fund which is in connection with St. Thomas' Hospital that thirty-five probationer nurses who completed their year of training were placed on the register of Nightingale nurses, and were taken on to the staff of St. Thomas' Hospital. It would appear from this that the Nightingale nurses are considered to be fully-trained at the end of one year, a period of training required of them 39 years ago, when the school was first opened. But surely, the training of nurses has progressed since Miss Nightingale inaugurated the first school in this country, and what was then considered a sufficient curriculum cannot now be held to be so. We believe that as a fact the training of Nightingale probationers is continued after they join the staff of St. Thomas' Hospital. It is therefore the more to be deplored that the report of the Nightingale Fund conveys the impression that probationers are registered at the end of a year. It is stated that "from the opening of the school in June 1860 to the end of 1898, 1,519 candidates have been admitted, and 899, after completing a year's probationary training have been placed on the register of Nightingale nurses, and received appointments at St. Thomas' or some other public hospital or infirmary or district nursing institution." Surely the Committee of the Fund do not consider their nurses fully-trained at the end of a year.

As St. Thomas' Hospital is justly considered the mother of nurse training-schools in this country, it is the duty of the Nightingale Committee to show a sense of its responsibility by adopting a more modern standard of training, as an example to the junior and, it must be acknowledged, more progressive schools.

It is incumbent upon the hospital which has the distinction of being in the van as regards nursing organization to maintain its original position, and by its progressive attitude to continue to lead the way. An announcement that the Committee of St. Thomas' Hospital officially recognizes that a course of three years' training is the shortest period consistent with efficiency would be welcome.

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