

Guide Thou mine hands, that e'en their touch may prove  
 The gentleness and aptness born of love ;  
 Bless Thou my feet, and while they softly tread,  
 May faces smile on many a sufferer's bed.  
 Sanctify my lips and guide my tongue,  
 Give me a word in season for each one ;  
 Clothe me with patient strength all tasks to bear,  
 Crown me with Hope and Love, which know no fear,  
 And Faith, that coming face to face with Death,  
 Shall e'en inspire with joy the dying breath.  
 All through the arduous day my actions guide,  
 And mid the lonely night watch by my side.  
 So shall I wake refreshed, with strength to pray :  
 Work in me, through me, with me, Lord, this day.

### Massage by the Blind.

An interesting movement for establishing an Institute for Massage in connection with which blind persons will be employed is now being organised. The temporary offices of the Institute are at 53, Victoria Street, S.W., and the Hon. Secretary is Mrs. MacNicol, 64, Lancaster Gate, Hyde Park, W. So far, in this country, the blind have been little employed in this work, but it has been proved that they can become expert in the practice of massage, and attain a high degree of skill. In Japan, from time immemorial, the blind have been trained in massage, and, until recently, its practice in that country was almost exclusively in their hands.

In Yokohama, with a population of close on half a million, there are about 1,000 men and women engaged in massage. Of these only 100 have their eyesight ; the other 900 are blind. Four hundred belong to a guild, and 500 work on their own account. The education in massage given to the blind in Japan appears to be very thorough. For the better-class practitioners of the art a good general education is requisite. They then spend from three to five years as pupils at the schools for the blind, acquiring a thorough knowledge of the science and art of massage. At the conclusion of this training they are well able to support themselves, and receive or visit patients as required. Massage is also taught by private masters, who take apprentices for a term of years, after which they obtain employment under apparently very unsatisfactory conditions. Each evening these apprentices are sent out into the street to shout for patients.

In Great Britain several blind operators are at present making a livelihood by massage, but, being unconnected with any organisation, work at considerable disadvantage. It is now proposed that rooms shall be secured in a central situation, and placed under the charge of a trained nurse. It is proposed (1) that they shall be used for the reception of patients, and (2) as a central office where applications for blind operators can be received. Many persons will watch the movement with great interest.

### A Point of Professional Importance.

A point of much professional importance is raised in the last report of the Birmingham and Midland Hospital for Women, at Sparkhill, in a speech made by Mr. George Hookham, Chairman of the Board of Management, at the annual meeting. Referring to the death-rate in the institution, he said : " In the years 1894-97 the four years' average was 6.4 ; and the percentage culminated in 1897 at practically 11 per cent. They could not point to anything wrong in the hospital, they could not find any remission on the part of the medical staff, and they were forced, much against their will—because there really was no hint of neglect—to the conclusion that the nursing staff had got out of hand. They all had the greatest liking and appreciation for the then Matron ; but they regarded it as quite clear that she had lost grasp of the nursing staff, and they ventured to act upon that supposition and to make a change. The results were most interesting. In 1897 the percentage was 10.9, in 1898 it was 3.8, in 1899 and 1900 it was 2.94, last year it was 4.2. He was sure the medical staff would be the last to claim that this was due in any great measure to their superiority in the last four years to what they were four years ago ; they could ascribe the improvement to the more efficient management at Sparkhill, and so give credit where credit was due. He wished to say that in the opinion of the Committee they had a most valuable servant in Miss Richmond. That enabled him to criticise the figure of 4.2. Their results were good, but they should be better. Whatever the figures were, he hoped that not a single life would be lost through want of prevision, or criticism, or action on the part of the Committee, or of care on the part of the acting or nursing staff.

This statement is of great importance, because, while giving full credit to the Matron of the hospital for its efficient management, it practically places upon the nursing staff the responsibility for the death-rate in the hospital, and this, whether for good or ill, should not be accepted by a subordinate service. This responsibility must be placed where it rightfully belongs, with the medical staff. We do not for a moment wish to depreciate the value of skilled nursing, or to say that the prestige and success of medical practitioners cannot be enhanced or injured by it. On the contrary, there is abundant evidence that both these results may occur. The present instance is a case in point. Only the medical profession, with whom the responsibility for the *treatment* of the sick rests, must be held responsible for results. In relation to the treatment of the sick, nurses carry out the directions of the medical officers ; they do not assume, or wish to assume, an independent position.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)