

As head of the domestic staff the Matron's great sheet anchor is her Assistant Matron and her second the cook. Given an able, conscientious Assistant Matron and a good cook, who is a fair manager and interested in her work, and many of your domestic troubles cease to trouble you. As you have no steward, it is your Assistant Matron who issues the stores, looks after the linen room, acts as Home Sister, controls the laundry and dispenses the stimulants. It is to her you hand your keys and your worries as you nod good-bye out of the cab that carries you away for your holiday, and you are lucky if you can do so with a peaceful mind.

As for the cook, I make it a rule to interview her daily in the afternoon, settle the meals for the following day, and write the orders. I see the dinners served to the wards myself daily with my Assistant Matron, unless I am unavoidably prevented, when she takes my place, and I find it a good plan. If you personally order and apportion the dinners and see them before they go to the wards, you know they are all right, which is a great comfort.

My committee are liberal in the matter of uniform, so I am able to supply all my servants with proper uniform, caps, dresses, and aprons, which improve the general appearance of the domestic staff and also, I fancy, gives them a greater feeling of pride in their position in the hospital, always a good thing.

The unwritten laws of etiquette of the servants' hall will always be respected by the wise Matron, as long as they do not clash with rules. The law-making and law-abiding tendency of the English nation is very much exemplified by the readiness of all servants to obey and conform to a well-understood and long-standing regulation, whilst frequent and ill-judged alterations are always resented. They generally accept even strong reproof given justly, by the right person, very well indeed. Never lightly dismiss for a slight fault a good servant. Be just and always let the punishment fit the offence.

To conclude, the Matron should remember Florence Nightingale's advice, and arrange her work so that she is not indispensable, and when she is absent the hospital routine goes on as well and smoothly as if she were present. That is the true test. Happy the Matron who can so thoroughly depend on her subordinates that she knows she is little missed (officially) when she is away.

So much for hospital. In her private life the Matron should mix freely in such social life as appeals to her tastes, she should enjoy such pleasures as please her, and keep her mind free from the narrowing influence of a post that must always be harassing and absorbing. Further, it behoves her to be a good citizen, to take that interest in the affairs of her profession and its advancement which her position demands, and for which associations such as the Matrons' Council were founded. It is when we come together to discuss matters respecting which we alone meet on common ground (all others criticise us from another standpoint) that we really feel our weakness, our need of mutual help, and our desire to appeal to the verdict of those who really understand us. It is there we meet

"Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,
The judgment of our peers."

As Others See Us.

ELIZABETH ROBINS' CONCEPTION OF AN ENGLISH NURSE AS SHOWN IN "A DARK LANTERN."

A Correspondent, a Matron and trainer of nurses, who finds time in her busy life to dip into the literature of the day, has extracted from "The Dark Lantern" the author's sketch of a trained nurse. Our readers must judge for themselves whether it is a fair portrait.

"Few English nurses, even amongst those best born, have got beyond the vulgar fear of being classed with servants, therefore, that part of their duty which is traditionally 'servants' work' they slur and scamp, quite in the fashion of the least admirable of the class they are most anxious to be differentiated from. To watch Nurse Phillips dust the room was to lie and long to jump up and show her how. She shared the conviction of the lower class Londoner that to clean a room is to stir up the dust in it—at most to remove the dirt from one quarter to another."

When the patient objected to her clinical thermometer being put away in its case after the perfunctory pouring of a little water over the bulb and pointed out as a contrast the "foreign" method of cleansing with an antiseptic solution, "the depth of the English nurse's ignorance lay revealed. She had as little idea of the meaning of aseptic as any scullion." There are other little details mentioned, which (not unnaturally) grated on the patient's nerves, such as the nurse's habit of placing the dish covers on the bed when her patient took her meals; "the steam or grease was like to run down on the coverlid," and the handling of the clean linen by the nurse (after mending the fire) with unwashed hands, the "fingers witnessing to London grime."

"Oh, don't!" cried the patient. "Do wait till you've washed your hands."

"I can't be always washing." The nurse sniffed up disdain through her cold nose.

But the climax arrived when the patient watched the nurse washing her medicine glass. She "saw how a little water was poured into the glass and then emptied out, saw the medicine still showing red and sticky. More water, and oh, horror! the nurse put two of her purple fingers into the glass and rubbed them round—but with the ensanguined fluid, and, in the act of wiping the glass, arrested by a voice from the bed:—

"Surely you will at least rinse it first." The nurse never even turned round. "I have." "Not since you had your fingers in the glass." "My fingers are clean."

Miss Elizabeth Robins seems to have been peculiarly unfortunate with the English nurses whom she has met. One is glad to think that the nurse depicted is certainly not typical of the profession in England, and one would dearly like to know whether the nurse in question had ever received any training, and if so, for how long, and in what institution.

On the other hand, these extracts may well give us food for reflection, and probationers will be none the worse for reading, marking and inwardly digesting them.

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