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Editorial.

THE ASSET OF PROFESSIONAL STATUS.

"Who steals my purse steals trash.
T'was mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands ;
But, he who filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him
And makes me poor indeed."

What's in a name? To a professional woman everything, for her reputation is her most valuable asset—her stock in trade; upon which she depends as her means of self support.

Now professional reputations are not made in a day. A nurse begins to make hers on the day she enters a hospital for training, and slowly but surely, if she is successful, she builds it up from day to day by devotion to her work, by increasing skilfulness, by developing powers of organisation, method, and management, by tact and kindness, until at last, as a trained and trusted worker, she places on the market the goods she has to sell, viz., her professional skill and her unblemished reputation, through which she is promoted from one post to another, her good name becoming an increasingly valuable asset, as it enables her to secure posts carrying with them larger salaries and emoluments. It will be readily understood, therefore, that it is of the utmost professional and financial importance to a trained nurse to keep what she has gained.

As a rule she has no private income, and her good name is her only professional and commercial asset. By its means she may reach the summit of her profession and, with an honourable position, relative affluence. But should she lose it, she loses with it not only the prestige and position which

it has taken her many years of hard work to gain, but also her means of self-support so that from comfortable circumstances the descent to poverty is easy, more especially in these days of keen competition, when literally hundreds of well-qualified candidates compete for a desirable post.

It will readily be realised that when a woman's good name is all she possesses, any irresponsible action which tarnishes that good name unjustly, inflicts upon her irreparable damage. How careful, therefore, the Committees of Hospitals, Nursing Institutions, and other employers of trained nurses should be to sift accusations which may be made against the nurses and officials under their direction. Only for the gravest reasons, and on evidence which supports by proof any accusations made, should a Committee summarily discharge a nurse.

Take the recent case which has been so widely and adversely commented on in the professional and public press of the sudden dismissal of the late Lady Superintendent at the Nurses' Hostel. Miss Hulme, who went to the Hostel with an honourable record of many years standing, contends that she has been unable to obtain any valid reason for this peremptory and unjust action, and even the frivolous pretexts which have been advanced have been unsupported by proof.

Nevertheless the Board of Directors, acting within their strict legal rights, have summarily terminated her engagement and apparently the professional wrong which they have inflicted upon her in no way troubles their corporate conscience.

It must, however, be some compensation to this lady to know that she has the warm sympathy of her profession at large.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)