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**Editorial.**

PROFESSIONAL HONOUR.

In another column a correspondent inquires our opinion as to the justifiability of a nurse, who has proper time allowed her for sleeping in the day, going to sleep when on duty at night. It is, of course, to put it on the lowest ground, a matter of common honesty on the part of any worker to "do the work for which he draws the wage." But apart from this, surely a sense of compassion for the sick and professional honour should make any nurse keen to keep on the *qui vive* when on duty.

We are fain to believe that few nurses so far forget themselves as to go soundly asleep when on duty at night, but there are some who consider it justifiable to get into a drowsy condition, whose claim is "I can hear in a moment if anything is wanted." That is not the right attitude to assume. In the first place it is a dangerous one; drowsiness may easily drift into forgetfulness, and in the second place a nurse who is on duty at night is not there merely to hear if anything is wanted. She must be on the alert and observant of the patient's symptoms and needs. She should not wait till he expresses his needs, but should forestall them. It must be remembered also that when skilled nursing is needed at night the patient is, as a rule, critically ill, and a drowsy nurse is an unsafe one.

We are not now referring to those cases in which one nurse only is on duty with a patient. Obviously, she must then get her sleep as best she can, but to those in which either a member of the family or another nurse undertakes the day duty, and a second one is engaged for night work. No

condemnation can be too strong for the nurse who allows herself to sleep under these circumstances. She is not only depriving the patient of the attention to which he is entitled, but her lack of conscientiousness tarnishes the reputation of the profession to which she belongs, and whose fair name it should be her pride to keep spotless.

The good name of her profession lies indeed to an unusual degree in the hands of the private nurse. She is left much to her own responsibility, and there are many such nurses who, realising this, honourably discharge their duty, allowing no thought of self to enter in, who place the patient first and foremost, and who are not quick to ask whether such and such a bit of work is strictly within the bond. They hold themselves bound to give a fair day's work for a fair day's wage, and they earn the gratitude, the respect, and often the friendship of the patient. These are things which, by the way, are not in the bond either.

But does a nurse never allow the circumstances of a case as they affect herself to influence her? Does she never give up a case where she personally is not comfortable, although the patient may really need her trained services? We wish we could think such a charge could never truthfully be brought against a nurse. Yet the one who puts her own comfort and convenience before the necessities of the patient has missed the whole spirit of her vocation. The present age is one of self-pleasing, but of all people it is most incumbent upon nurses to give this failing a wide berth. Abnegation of self, and devotion to others though not universally cultivated are virtues invariably expected of nurses.

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