

of the patient. They were in many respects grand women, who worked against mighty odds, and seeing the evils they were powerless to lessen. But their work and effort has not been without success, for the three years' standard of training has now become fairly general, and during these years we can claim to train nurses efficiently and systematically without detriment or discomfort to the patient.

To do this it is necessary that the nurse in charge of the wards (the Sister, as she is now called in England) should be a fully trained expert nurse, having much experience, and able to teach and train the nurses under her. After many years' experience, I fear, I think the perfect Sister somewhat rare. She must possess so many virtues and have so few faults. The Sister who will manage her ward with efficiency at any cost to herself is not uncommon, but the woman who can do that and, among all the difficulties, claims, and work of a ward, find time to teach her probationers thoroughly, patiently, and minutely, is more difficult to find. It is one of the difficulties of a Matron to find the right women to appoint as Sisters, and having found them to keep them, for their price is above rubies. The first essential, then, for the efficient practical training of probationers in the wards is that it must be done by an expert nurse, who is also an experienced Sister.

The second point is the probationers themselves. We cannot make bricks without straw, and we cannot make good nurses unless we have women to train who are sufficiently intelligent and sufficiently well educated to assimilate and benefit by the careful training we are ready to give them. The training and teaching which are given to nurses of to-day is not milk for babes. We have, alas! in the majority of cases to be content with some less than the best, and do our best to make the best of them, but the ideal probationer for whom all Matrons pine, possesses good health, a sane, intelligent mind, good education, good manners, and deft, clever hands.

The third point is the nature of the teaching which should be given by our perfect Sister to our perfect nurse. It has been said by a learned professor, who wrote a book on bacteria, that "The infinitely little are masters of the world." And we know that man is becoming master of the infinitely little, and that he does this by the most minute, systematic, and unwearied observation of their habits, distribution, modes of life, and the most effectual methods of destruction. To assist in this unseen but deadly war physicians and

surgeons need the help of nurses, and to enable them to render help which is adequate and efficient the training of the nurse must be done carefully, minutely, and systematically. She must be taught the importance of detail, the minute care necessary to produce and maintain surgical cleanliness. The careful observation of her patient, accurate obedience to orders, and absolute punctuality. She must also learn that as no careless or ignorant statement can be reliable, to weigh and balance her words.

I must just touch on what all this careful training does for the probationers themselves. In the first place they are taught to observe. No quality is so conspicuously absent in the new probationer, no quality is more necessary for a nurse. It is taught by never overlooking a fault, however small, by encouraging probationers to make reports on the condition of the patients, by never passing a careless report, or accepting a vague statement. At first the new probationer is given the brasses to clean; that is small and unimportant, but if the Sister never overlooks bad work, those brasses begin to impress themselves on the probationer as something in her charge, and the teaching has begun. This goes on increasingly all the three years of training; one little responsibility gets added to another, till the nurse is able to stand upright on her own feet, bearing the enormous responsibility that sooner or later comes to all nurses. In the daily intercourse with her patients in the ward, the nurse learns to recognise our common humanity in the humblest of them, and to call nothing common or unclean which she must do for them. Let me say that I count this by no means the least important of all the important lessons at the bedside of the sick, whether she rejoices with the convalescent on the return of health or accompanies the dying to the edge of that dread river we must all cross.

Authority and responsibility there must be in the duties of a Matron, which, apart from the training of the nurses and manipulation of the nursing staff, are so numerous that it is quite impossible to enumerate them in detail. I will only indicate them sketchily.

First, there is the cleaning of the hospital. The floors of the wards, corridors, stairs, halls, theatres, lavatories, bathrooms, etc., all to be kept perfectly clean and polished. The Matron must arrange when they are to be cleaned, how this is to be done, and by whom; how many hours may be so employed, and what rate of payment may be made.

Second, there is the linen which the Matron must choose, and see to its distribution

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