

The spirit of the age tends towards the subdivision of labour, of departments, and of responsible heads of those departments; and well-managed Hospitals fall in in their arrangements with that spirit. The Secretary confines his attention to secretarial work; the Medical Staff are fully occupied with the responsibility of treating the patients and conducting the Medical School; the Steward really fulfils his functions and is master of the Hospital stores; while the Matron and Superintendent of Nursing is head of her department, and has the control and supervision of the female staff and nursing arrangements.

In an Infirmary the Medical Superintendent combines in his own person multitudinous functions, enough to engage half-a-dozen ordinary functionaries. In addition to the Medical supervision of the few hundred patients in the Infirmary, which he has to perform assisted only by his junior, he has to keep various books relating to the purest secretarial work, to be ready to answer questions on the most trivial domestic details, to superintend the good behaviour of the whole Infirmary Staff, including the nursing department, which is placed, except in a few cases, entirely under his direct control. That under such circumstances the nursing arrangements should be as simple and primitive as possible is not surprising.

I doubt if any man is capable of maintaining the same high standard of scientific interest in his work when his attention must necessarily be continually distracted by the many other points for which he is responsible, or whether he be not greatly tempted to slur over his Medical work, when he is troubled in his mind respecting the bad behaviour of some subordinate member of the Staff, or the inefficient manner in which the back-door steps have been cleaned. Is he not rather likely to come gradually to think that pure medicine and treatment, which does not show much, and which the guardians certainly do not appreciate, is hardly of so much importance after all?

In many Infirmarys, and notably in the Hospitals under the Metropolitan Asylums Board, the Medical Superintendent selects the Nurses, and even the female servants, and it is not unusual to see advertisements for scullery-maids, &c., to "apply to the Medical Superintendent." There is a more than distinct element of the ridiculous about such an advertisement.

I may be considered as enunciating an extreme view when I state that it is better for the most inefficient woman to have direct control over women than the most excellent man. It is an old proverb, that a woman should have no master

till she marries. The personal supervision of women by individual men blunts all chivalry in their relations to one another, and tends largely to deceitful and underhand behaviour on the part of the women. It is concealed under the name of "tact," but might often be called by a much harsher one.

Dr. Bridges, the well-known Inspector of the Local Government Board, has lately sent in a memorandum to the Metropolitan Asylums Board relating the qualifications which appear to him essential for the efficient nursing of Fever Hospitals. His main points are these:—(1.) A Trained Nursing Staff should be placed within the Wards of the Hospital, and when off duty under the superintendence of a highly qualified officer of their own sex. (2.) Their subordination to such an officer need not, and in practice does not, in any way interfere with their implicit obedience to the directions of the Medical Staff in the treatment of the patients. (3.) Subordination to a Matron is never willingly conceded by a Nursing Staff, unless the Matron herself possesses the skill and experience of a Nurse. When this is not the case, the Nurses may, no doubt, comply with such orders as she may give for their behaviour when off duty; but she will not have that moral ascendancy over them which is so essential to the training and discipline of a well-ordered Staff.

Such an arrangement is perfectly simple and natural, and should recommend itself to every unbiassed mind. Not one iota of *Medical* superintendence would be removed from the Medical man's hand, but the Matron being directly responsible for her own Staff to the Board, would relieve him of an immense amount of unnecessary worry, whilst a continual and inevitable source of friction would be removed.

Usually the Guardians reserve to themselves the right of selecting and appointing a Nurse when required, and by the mode of procedure adopted, are responsible for the introduction of a great many unsuitable and untrained women as Nurses in Infirmarys, lowering the general tone of the Staff.

No Matron but will agree with me as to the impossibility of forming a just estimate of a Nurse's capabilities—much less of her character—from reading over one or two formal testimonials in her presence, yet with absolutely no further inquiry as to her suitability. This is all that is generally considered necessary at such elections by Boards of Guardians, when the formality of choosing a Nurse is gone through. So little are some Guardians alive as to the necessity of appointing *Nurses* to do *Nurses'* work, that to my knowledge, two years ago, two Nurses were appointed

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