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**Editorial.**

**DOMESTICITY AND DISCIPLINE IN HOSPITALS.**

The administration of the domestic department of a hospital is a matter of great importance both from the point of view of the committee of management, who are responsible for its efficiency and economy, and from that of the patients and resident staff, whose health and comfort depend to a great extent upon the smooth ordering of the household arrangements. It follows that the official to whom the direction of this department is assigned must possess certain qualifications if the work is to be satisfactorily performed. The officer must be a permanent one, experienced in domestic management, skilful in keeping down expenses while providing the maximum amount of comfort, and able to maintain discipline in the ranks of a large staff, and at the same time to create an atmosphere of contentment, an atmosphere essential to the making of a happy home at all times, and more especially in any institution where the sick are received.

For these reasons it is apparent that the above duties, and the authority which is necessary to their effective performance, should be placed in the hands of the Matron of the hospital, and this applies especially to hospitals where the head of the secretarial department is non-resident. The Matron is a permanent officer, while house-surgeons and physicians come and go. She has usually had, and always should have had, previous experience in institutional house-keeping, while young men who have just completed their medical studies can have had no experience of domestic administration, and are, as a rule, totally ignorant as to the supplies needed, the standards which should be maintained, and the ceaseless vigilance which is necessary if contracts are to be kept.

Again, if the responsible official in matters of discipline is a young house-surgeon it is evident that the general tone of the institution must suffer because of his lack of experience in the control of a staff of nurses and domestics, male and female.

In these days of highly-specialised work it seems almost incredible that any hospital committee should suggest placing the domestic management of a hospital under the supervision of a non-resident secretary, or under the control of a young house-surgeon or physician.

The same qualities are needed in the executive officer, who administers the internal economy of a hospital as are found in the ideal home maker, and home making is woman's work, not man's. Ideally man goes out to work day by day, and though modern civilisation shuts him up in the library of the student, the consulting-room of the physician and surgeon, or restricts his duties within the walls of a hospital, domesticity and discipline within the home will always remain woman's province.

Whenever there arises from time to time the suggestion that man shall reign in woman's kingdom the result is disastrous if it is carried out. More especially is this the case when a young house-surgeon or physician—whose mother would smile at the idea of his knowing anything of household management—is placed in control of the domestic administration of a public institution, while the experienced Matron looks on in amazement at the extravagance and disorganisation caused, not necessarily by his want of good-will, but by his lack of experience and knowledge of an expert branch of work. We have no hesitation in saying that a committee of men who place such responsibility in the hands of a young and inexperienced medical man cannot realise the lack of discipline which might result.

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