

character is worthy of the name. Such a nurse is always open to suspicion; how can she be trusted with the numerous private matters which a large institution brings before her notice. To prattle to the outside world about her patients, and their private histories, is despicable. Self-control, therefore, should help to exclude the possibility of gossip and all it entails.

If character be important in those holding subordinate positions how much more important must character be in those in authority, and it would tend to the improvement of the whole profession if greater weight were given to the possession of character by those chosen for administrative posts in the nursing world.

If one could teach the nursing staff of our institutions to see matters from this point of view it would end in respect and devotion to all superior officers in a consciousness of progressive development, and a refreshing sense of a well-disciplined mind, and surely this is well worth trying for. This is not easily done, but is anything worth having that is easily attained?

A recent number of the *British Medical Journal* contained an interesting article written by a doctor, descriptive of his own experiences while a patient suffering from bladder trouble. His remarks apply not only to his own personal impressions, but embody many valuable hints which might be taken to heart by all those who come into contact with sick persons.

Few of you probably have had an opportunity of reading the original article, and their intrinsic merit as well as their coincidence with the subject matter of my paper make them well worth your acquaintance. I make the following quotations from the article:—

"The nurses in *this* home were not merely surgeons' assistants. They all looked carefully to the physical and mental comfort of the patients, though some were more satisfactory in this respect than others. The Head Nurse or Lady Superintendent presiding over the department of the house in which my room was situated, was an almost ideal woman for the position she occupied." Speaking of the sufferings he endured from surgical shock, the writer goes on:—

"My own regular nurse, an admirable surgeon's dresser, failed me miserably. Then came a good angel, in the form of a young woman. A nurse in training whom I had never seen till that day. Would that time permitted me to describe her and her mental ministrations. She seemed to draw me out of a hopeless slough of awful misery by methods of

human sympathetic appeal that perhaps only a woman has at command."

He proceeds then to state certain classes of nurses who ought not to have adopted the profession.

"Those without the delicate mental touch termed 'tact.' A tactless woman is a sort of monstrosity. I had some slight and unpleasant experience of one such nurse in Canada, and a bad two days of another in England, when the Matron at my request replaced her by a very admirable substitute.

"Those whose hands will never learn delicate handling. One such I could only put up with because she was so well disposed, and looked so successfully to my comfort in small matters. Quite a contrary experience was mine with a young nurse, who during all the weeks she attended to me after my big operation never on a single occasion caused me the least pain."

I need hardly quote further.

It has fallen to our lot—as Matrons of hospitals and institutions—to mould and train young women to be nurses.

They come to us very often straight from their own homes. Their characters are not fully formed; they, as it were, are stepping into public life for the first time, waiting to be guided and moulded by their training school.

And surely the tone and character of the training school will be what the Matron, the head, makes it. She is the figure-head (and I hope more than the figure-head), the influence, and example of the whole training school and hospital.

Surely then our responsibility is great—so great that it means a great deal of character to help us to keep our ideals high, and to *always try* to act up to them, for our own sakes as well as the sakes of those around us.

It is our duty to do our best under all circumstances.

We have a right to expect the best from our fellow workers. It is no credit to us to do our best; it is no credit to them to do their best. It is simply our duty.

The Edinburgh Trades Council have recently made complaints of the treatment of nurses at the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, but we are glad to note that at the last meeting of the managers a letter was read from the Council stating that having investigated the matter they found there was no foundation for the complaints. Lady Susan Gilmour said that the nurses were highly indignant at the idea that the complaints emanated from them, for they knew that if they had anything to complain of they only had to apply to the managers for redress.

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