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EDITORIAL.

THE NURSE AT HOME.

Probably in no department of our hospitals has greater advance been made in the last quarter of a century than in the accommodation provided for the nurses. Although in connection with some institutions the nursing homes still need to be rebuilt, the majority of committees recognise that they cannot hope to attract a good class of probationers, or to maintain their nurses in the condition of physical efficiency necessary to secure the best work, unless thought and care are expended on the nursing staff.

So, in connection with our best hospitals nurses' homes are now to be found in which provision is made for the comfort of the nursing staff when off duty, including separate bedrooms, restful sitting-rooms, attractive dining-rooms, as well as classrooms for the instruction of probationers. Most nurses have a love of home strongly developed. Is not the art of home-making an underlying principle of all good nursing? And therefore they, more than most people, appreciate a domain of their own, where they can relax in a way impossible in the hospital, and obtain the rest which will enable them to return to duty refreshed and competent.

This is one reason why it is important that the nurses' home should be separated from the hospital proper, for there is always a certain amount of tension, a sense of being "on duty" inseparable from residence in the hospital building, but there are other reasons equally forceful: proximity to a ward means disturbed rest at night, for which reason, while Sisters should have their duty rooms off the wards, where they can do their clerical work, interview members of the staff, and patients' friends,

they should reside and sleep in the home, and the only meal permissible in the duty-room should be tea in the afternoon. The principal meals should always be taken away from the ward atmosphere.

Some Sisters who have become accustomed to the method of sleeping in small rooms off the wards may be inclined to question this statement, and to think that it is impracticable they should be away from their wards at night. If, however, a certificated nurse is left in charge, and there is a Night Sister on duty to whom she can refer, there is no reason why the Day Sister should sleep with "one eye open."

The same principle applies to the nurses. Do we not all remember nurses in days gone by who slept in bedrooms off hospital wards, where little fresh air, and less sunlight, ever penetrated, for the arrangements for lighting and ventilating were of the most primitive description, and the rattle of stretchers, and tramp of porters as a new case was brought up to a ward, wove themselves into their dreams? They were pale, weary, and anæmic women who dragged themselves down to an early breakfast, and we are glad that committees for the most part are wiser now, and realize the folly—the criminal folly is scarcely too strong a word—of destroying the health of one set of people in order to restore that of another.

Bad air, bad odours inevitably ascend to the top of the building, and the nurses' quarters, if they are housed in a hospital building, are generally placed at the top of a block of wards.

It should be a *sine qua non* in all plans accepted for the erection of new hospitals that the nurses' quarters should be in a block apart from the main building. Luxury is neither necessary nor in place, but comfort, rest, serenity, are the due of a class of workers who give freely and ungrudgingly of their health and strength when on duty.

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