

PRIZE ESSAY COMPETITION.—XXIII.

[Honourable Mention.]

Describe, for a Hospital containing fifty beds, the number of Nursing Officials, Staff, Pupils, or Probationers required; mention their duties, their hours, and the regulations necessary for their satisfactory working.

BY MRS. J. G. TAYLOR.

(Matron, Victoria Hospital, Hull.)

THE architectural designs of Hospitals, in the present day, are so various and of such totally opposite types, that without having seen the one under consideration, it is rather difficult to imagine its nursing capabilities. In some, *all* the originality has been lavished on the elaborate Wards, the sanitary arrangements, department for out-patients; every idea seems exhausted on these certainly most necessary points. Some have made the comfort, even luxury of the staff their one chief aim—Nurses must have large airy rooms, the day duty and sleeping accommodation must be perfect, large servants' halls, &c., &c., recreation rooms, whilst others have evidently gone in for outside effects—the Wards, offices, and everything else are subservient to the particular style of architecture. Appearance has undoubtedly a great deal to do with the success of most things, and with persons too, but the *inside* sometimes has to suffer for *outside* show where very artistic designs are to be carried out. I know of one similarly affected in the North—one very principal Ward, large, light and lofty, has no place for the fourteen beds it is intended to hold. This is owing to the perplexity of the windows in carrying out the "style" they come close together and have to be screened off bed-high before its occupants can be admitted.

I think Hospitals should be planned with due regard to the comfort, use, and space of the Wards and offices; also with an equal degree of care for the convenience of the staff. It appears rather paradoxical that large rooms, airy corridors and staircases, and such vast amounts of fresh air should be deemed so necessary by day, when we can move about and gather so much involuntarily; when small rooms and very close quarters are made to suffice for night accommodation, where, to a certain extent, we are prisoners for so many hours, it must counteract the effect of the benefit we receive during the day.

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Though the consideration for Nurses—their comforts and privileges—has made rapid strides of late years, there is still room for improvement in this respect, as well as in the many hours they are compelled to remain on duty. Domestic servants have time to themselves, when to disturb them would be looked upon as a liberty. "On duty" with a Nurse means on foot. I don't know that Hospital authorities like to see them sitting; but I am sure patients do not, and it is hardly to be wondered at. Sometimes the request is merely an excuse for a little chat, which helps to pass away a little weary time. This means fatigue to the Nurse, however willingly the help is given.

The Hospital we are now arranging is an imaginary one, so I can only divide it to the best of my ability. It is doubtless a "general" one, and for that kind—one of fifty beds—is somewhat difficult to "nurse," for this reason—there must be room within its walls for all sorts and conditions of men and women; so on this account the Wards are comparatively small. The cases cannot be mixed, so I shall divide them in this way—Two Wards, each containing eight beds for men, medical and surgical. Two of the same size and for similar complaints for women. Attached to these a small Ward, containing three beds each, for special cases, which can be used for either medical or surgical purposes; and the Nurse of the Ward which supplies the patients will be in charge of it.

Ofcourse, there must be a Children's Ward. No Hospital would be considered complete without that, and it must contain twelve beds; this brings the number to fifty.

There will be an out-patient department, which will require the services of a Nurse for a few hours daily. In fixing the number of the staff we must be careful to have sufficient, so that everything goes smoothly and without confusion *within*, or we shall speedily be hearing of dissatisfaction from *without*, for fierce is the light that burns upon all public Institutions. However, I am dividing both Nurses and patients the way in which I think will be for the best. I should require one Trained Nurse for each Ward (five), and one Night Nurse, four Probationers, two probably being required for night work.

I have seen young Nurses really like night duty, and suffer no ill effects from it, *certainly* after the first week. I myself think it a very necessary and special part of training, and ought to be gone through after the first six months, if not, it comes

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