

self all the four points of obedience, and there will be no more impressive lesson for the Probationer than to see the Sister who has the knowledge and experience on which to form a judgment submitting it at once to the opinion of the Medical Officer and the Matron's wishes, expressed or implied. Watchful by word and silence to prevent all critical remarks, adverse or favourable, on the actions and orders of the superiors, she must be exceedingly careful, not only to inculcate in the Probationers under her the necessity of doing as they are bid, but she must never yield to the temptation of discussing and "talking over" with her Nurses orders that may not quite please her or arrangements she may wish altered. Such canvassing of opinion on orders given or wishes known is a frequent source of little, and sometimes of great, friction in Hospital life. The Sister feels aggrieved by some rule. She is obliged, indeed, to carry it out, but in transmitting the order she conveys with it to the Nurses her own unwillingness to accept it, and the Nurses feel supported by the Sister in her dissatisfaction; and so the evil spreads, till the loyalty of each is undermined. The Sister must remember that not only is it necessary for her to carry out the direct orders of her superiors, but also she must infuse into the workers the right spirit to execute them. Not only must she see carried out punctually the rules of the Hospital, but she must make these rules and regulations attractive to her Nurses, and set them an example by the cheerful performance of her part. Then, and then only, will obedience add beauty with its gladness to their daily life. When a Sister cannot honestly believe that certain regulations are conducive to the efficient working of the Wards and the good of the Nurses and patients, I do not think it in the least incompatible with a perfect spirit of obedience for her to lay the matter, with entire respect and submission of judgment, before her superior. I feel sure no Matron would be otherwise than thankful for such help from a Sister; but as is the case between Probationer and Nurse, so between Sister and Matron—the latter holds the key to so many often conflicting interests and complex arrangements, of which the Sister knows nothing, that it is absolutely necessary that the Sister should approach her in such an attitude of mind that she can accept without a thought of criticism whatever her Superintendent's judgment in the matter may be. To all, though to some natures more than others, this is a difficult thing to attain. To keep the critical faculty—which for the training of others it is necessary to cultivate—in perfect control, when one's opinion differs from that of those under whom one is working, is one of

the hardest disciplines that obedience demands. It is the duty of the superior to subject to a severe criticism the work of those under her for training; but she has no right to give any expression to the same faculty when it is a question of the work of her superior. To criticise those over one is a wrong attitude of mind, and one that leads surely, though perhaps unconsciously, to much disloyalty in word and deed.

There is yet another aspect of a Sister's life much influenced by her right or wrong conception of the duty of obedience—her relation to her fellow-Sisters.

The Senior Sister who fully recognises her duty of loyal submission to the wishes of her Superintendent will, by deed, word, and *silence*, exercise a powerful influence over Junior Sisters, and give the keynote to the tone in the Sisters' part of the House. The Junior will pay deference to her senior in all courtesy; and, among them, there will be a much happier life if they remember that it is not their place to criticise each other, but that each in her own Ward is responsible to the Superintendent, and that the true spirit of obedience is as adverse to the critical fault-finding with regard to the management or action of other Sisters as it is to the orders and arrangements of superiors.

Nurses sometimes say among themselves, when the subject of obedience is brought before them, "Oh, it is easy for the Matron to talk; she can always do what she likes." No greater mistake exists; in all the Nursing community there is not one who has more constantly to submit her judgment, give up her own will and way of working, keep herself up to time with exactitude, and to strive in all difficulties and through all half-successes to maintain a cheerful spirit, than a Matron.

It frequently happens that she may see what she considers serious faults in the management of the Hospital over which she is placed, and she may represent them to the authorities; but, in nine cases out of twelve, her representation will have no effect. Or a simple way of arriving at the same results may occur to her, but she may be unable to bring the Secretary or Treasurer to see the matter from her point of view. Then the Matron who has learnt the duty of obedience will try honestly to make the best of matters without striving to carry out her own ideas; she will do her best to make successful the plans, or the lines of work, which her Committee have indicated they wish should be followed. She will endeavour to prevent personal feeling entering into the work. In every Committee and Management there are certain leading spirits, capable and energetic men and women, and it is with

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