

POINTS FOR PROBATIONERS.

By MISS E. J. R. LANDALE

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IF the question, "Why are you here?" were put to a company of Hospital Probationers, the immediate answer would undoubtedly be: "To be trained as Nurses," and it would be a good thing for the Nursing Profession were the word training understood in its full significance by all who so use it. As a fruit tree is trained, pruned, and supported that it may bear well-developed fruit, so the Probationer must have the strength of her character and capabilities directed, and her weak points strengthened and made firm. Self-confidence must be pruned down to the necessary qualifications of presence of mind and forethought; and the undecided, and the easy-going, must be made reliable, by learning obedience and accuracy.

If we ask further, "Why have you sought training?" and could we have perfectly honest answers to the question, I fear very different motives would be brought to light. Some to escape the monotony of a narrow home life; some only seek in it the means of earning a livelihood; some think thereby to raise themselves in the social scale. But there is only one motive that can be a power for good in a Nurse's life and work—*i.e.*, that she feels within herself that the desire to be devoted to the service of the sick is a God-sent vocation, and that by fulfilling it she can best attain the end for which she was made, and therefore find in Nursing her happiness. Only by working for God as her Master can a Nurse bear calmly and brightly the trials of that life. Let, then, your first object in entering the profession of Nursing be that you may use the gifts God has given you, for His glory, in the service of the sick.

While your more particular efforts must ever be directed to the good and comfort of your patients, you must remember you have a duty to yourselves which also involves much of your duty to the Institution to which you are attached. To many, health and strength is the only capital they have for their maintenance. Don't waste and squander it. A Nurse's life is healthy and wholesome if lived under good conditions, and much that can make it so lies with herself. Great self-denial and constant self-discipline are needed, for the matter is one which

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enters into the smallest detail of your life. If you rise late in the morning, you have no time to have the bracing refreshment of a bath, you begin your day in a hurry, and waste nerve power. At night, you are tired and might go to bed, but you stay chatting, because it is pleasant, and so lose the extra hour you might have in bed. In food, you know some certain thing disagrees with you, but you like it and take it, and pay the penalty by being "out of sorts." You feel out of sorts; it is a "bother" to take the little remedy or practise the self-denial which would put you right, and so you allow a little ailment to go on till, after a time of suffering in body and temper (which means discomfort to others as well as yourself) you get really ill, and your Institution has the expense and trouble of a sick Nurse. How often a scratched finger means a week off duty, for want of the precaution which should have prevented it becoming a poisoned hand!

The following wise rules, printed and given to Probationers by some of our Training Schools, cannot be too widely known and pondered:—

"1.—Pare the finger-nails close; be careful to see that they, and your hands, are scrupulously clean.

"2.—Look on anything that has soiled the fingers as a possible source of infection to yourself and others.

"3.—Look on a crack, or scratch, or pin puncture as likely to prove a poison nest, even more so than an open wound.

"4.—Such poison nests must be rendered harmless by first washing in pure water; secondly, by the application of Styptic Colloid; thirdly, by being covered with an indiarubber finger-stall.

"5.—Immediately before beginning a dressing, and, in every case, after you have touched a patient, whether in dressing wounds, rubbing in applications, administering enemata, internal syringing, washing out ears and eyes, you are to dip your hands in 1 in 80 carbolic, and use carbolic soap to wash them.

"6.—You are desired to remove all soiled dressings with forceps, not with your fingers; and on no account to remove adhesive plaster or dressing with your nails.

"7.—After offensive cases blow your nose and expectorate, and rinse your mouth and throat with Condy and water.

"8.—You are specially cautioned against going on duty without a meal.

"9.—Look on cuffs and aprons as possible

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