

distinctly understood that there are no short periods of service in such a serious matter as nursing the sick. Let each paying Probationer-ship be regarded merely as a stepping-stone to an appointment on the regular Staff of the Hospital; and let no more workers be admitted each year, than there will be probable vacancies to fill. Let no one be admitted as a paying Probationer, whose health and strength is not sufficiently good to make it probable that she will be able to conclude the service; and let the period of training for each Nurse be definitely fixed at three years. If these suggestions were adopted, we venture to believe that the present evil would soon be checked. If they are, or something else is, not speedily done, we have the gravest fears for the future both of Nursing and Nurses.

### A GUIDE TO MEDICAL AND SURGICAL NURSING.

BY RACHEL NORRIS.

#### CHAPTER III.

WHEN the Probationer makes her appearance for the first time in her Ward, properly equipped with cap and apron, a serviceable pair of scissors attached to her waist-band by a chain or ribbon about half a yard in length, and a well supplied pincushion equally ready to hand, she generally finds that bedmaking is the first practical part of Nursing with which she is expected to make herself acquainted.

I am not going to waste my time in telling how to make beds.

Every Hospital, and more than that, every Ward in every Hospital, has a way of its own, and it is easier to learn more from ten minutes' experience than from ten pages of writing. If the Probationer has been in domestic service, she will probably master the difficulty in the course of the first morning's work; but if she has all her life been accustomed to mere sedentary occupations, she must not be angry with herself if she does not succeed in giving satisfaction till after repeated failures. I know some otherwise accomplished Nurses who acknowledge a guilty feeling that they never quite made their own the art of tucking in the corners of the quilts with uniformity.

The washing of patients is another thing regarding which a little practice is worth a great deal of theory. One broad principle may be laid down about it, however—wash a patient as you would wish to be washed yourself. I know there is a great deal to be said about a patient's fitness for being washed when the operation approaches the nature of a bath, whether or no stimulants

should be administered before or after the exertion is encountered, but that is not the business of a Probationer, but of the Sister or Nurse in whose charge the Ward is. The Probationer's business is to do what she is ordered in the matter, to do it as thoroughly as she can, and with the greatest gentleness possible.

With respect to the other ordinary domestic employments of the Wards, it is equally impossible, and I may say impertinent, to lay down fixed rules for customs which are ever varying. The Probationer will probably be required to take her share of dusting, of feeding the patients, of dressing those that are helpless, and of preparing beef tea or broth for those who are unable to eat the regular Ward dinner, which is cooked in the kitchens for them.

Later on I shall give one or two recipes for the common delicacies which it is possible to make for Hospital patients, at the same time frankly confessing, as a Probationer, you will find them of very little use. The culinary operations will be probably limited during the year of probation to making beef tea and arrowroot, and perhaps egg-flip, and my advice is to all Probationers to cultivate the power of speed and skill. I know how valuable a quality speed is, but I trust I shall be forgiven the suspicion that rather too high a price is set upon it in Hospital work, and whether the tenderness and gentleness, which is such an essential of good Nursing, is not sometimes sacrificed to obtain it, though I am far from extenuating a *dawdle*. *First*, thoroughness, *then* speed, *always* gentleness, are the conditions of efficient Hospital service.

Most patients look forward all day to their comfortable tea, and I think the pleasure of giving it them as they like, quite worth a little extra trouble.

As I have said, with the rest of the patients' food a Probationer has but little to do. The diet ordered by the Doctors is either sent up direct from the kitchens, or prepared by the Ward Assistants, and it is not always that a Probationer assists in its distribution.

I wish it were otherwise, and would gladly see the kitchen of every Hospital Ward, when it has a kitchen, which is not always the case, become a little school of cookery in itself. When this day comes, however, there will, doubtless, come with it competent instructors in an art so useful.

The only thing to be said about a Probationer's duties as to ventilation, is to insist on the virtue of absolute obedience. Be the Ward stuffy, or be it draughty—and *every* Ward has a distinctive character as regards this—the Probationer must reserve her opinion till she is in a position to en-

*previous page*

*next page*