

method, and her eyes with intelligence and care. Time "off" is needed for study and preparation for her lectures and examinations. In the routine of ward work, there is an infinity of detail to be mastered, and, with the theoretical knowledge she must acquire at the same time, the Probationer is all the better for being a short time in the ward, where she has, as yet, no responsibility if, out of it, she is still doing earnest work for her professional life. To a second year, or to a trained, Nurse, I can imagine nothing more trying than an eight hours' shift. At the end of twelve hours, one hardly knows how to go and leave the worst cases, the interest and anxiety over them is so great. And what a "Sister's" life must be with these changes of Nurses, and how her anxiety and work is thereby increased, no one who has not tried it can guess.

There is no need to apply the eight hours movement to the Nurse's work in order to save her suffering from the hardness of her labour. Simple and more effective means lie ready to the hand of Hospital authorities would they but see them. Firstly, good and varied food is needed; not on paper, as represented by contracts, but on the table, carefully superintended by a good housekeeper. I have known cases where the quantity and variety was all that could be wished, but the quality of bread, butter, etc., so bad that the Nurses had to buy their own, or go without; or, again, where the quality was good, but the cooking so bad that the food was unwholesome.

Another thing on which Nurses' health and comfort largely depend, is good sleeping accommodation and bath arrangements, and cheerful, quiet, recreation rooms. It would be an excellent field for the members of a ladies' committee to undertake to keep the Nurses' sitting rooms supplied with papers and prettiness, not just old things which are not good enough for their own houses, but the fresh and dainty; plants and flowers, and whatever will lend a cheerful brightness. Too often the Nurses' sitting-room is in the darkest corner, underground, perhaps, and dull beyond description. Though I would, by no means, advocate the large increase of staff required for an eight hours' shift, I think every hospital should have a sufficient number of supernumerary Nurses. When these are too few, or non-existent, the anxiety and trial to the Matron is very great, and the strain on the staff serious. There need be no waste of labour. The extra Nurses should be available as "specials" for any very bad case, ready to take duty while a Nurse had a holiday, and where a ward is left short-handed owing to the sudden indisposition of some Nurse. Too often, with a small staff, "days off" are curtailed, or the enjoyment sadly damped by the thought of the fellow Nurse left struggling with double work in the ward. On the principle that prevention is better than cure,

many breakdowns might be saved if the Matron were able to send away for a rest, or extra holiday, a Nurse who looked white and over-tired after some unusually trying case. These are some of the ways in which Nurses might be saved from the effects of over-strain in their work.

There is no hardship in working twelve or thirteen hours, two or three days a week, at work one loves. There are many people who work longer with no such satisfactory result as the Nurse enjoys. Everywhere the best work is done for the love of it, and not for gain. Of course, the sentimental young lady who takes up Nursing to escape from home control and distasteful home duties, or the ambitious young woman who looks on her uniform as the badge of a social elevation, must be dis-illusioned when they find they have hard and unpleasing work to do; but to the truly vocationed Nurse, her work is her life, her home is her ward, the sick are her children. She troubles herself very little about money, too little indeed for her future good, and often spends some of her small salary on her patients, when it would be wiser to put it into a Pension Fund, or the Savings Bank; and tired though she may be, she will grieve to leave her patients when her twelve hours duty is ended if she knows, or fancies, that the Nurse who relieves her is not thoroughly capable of understanding them.

While there is much that Managers of Hospitals might improve in the condition of a Nurse's life, the Nurses for their part should endeavour to realize more than they do, their position as individual members of the Hospital administration, and their duty in such community life. Women are often sadly deficient in their feeling for the sacredness of contract, and are too ready to throw up engagements lightly. I fear, that unless broken agreements were visited by a heavy penalty, Probationers would be a source of great annoyance in Hospital management. The authorities should set the example, and remember there is at least an understood agreement, on their side, to give certain advantages to the Nurse: a systematic course of instruction and suitable conditions of life. It would be well if they examined from time to time how such obligations were being fulfilled by those whom they entrust with the regulation of details.

In many Workhouse Infirmaries the state of things is worse than what it was in General Hospitals fifty years ago, and a disgrace to our civilization. The Workhouse Nursing Association is doing much, but want of funds and want of suitable Nurses delay the good work. Those needed are the women who "take delight in self-sacrifice," and who have very special qualifications and a wide knowledge; who look on Nursing not as a means of livelihood, but as a noble calling to be exercised for the benefit of the most miserable of all sick

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