



'Forum' may be defined as a place where people gather. It was with this idea in mind that I opened this section for you—a place where Sister Tutors may gather together to exchange views, pool ideas and help solve each others problems.

You are a privileged group who have had the opportunities of advanced education, wide experience and perhaps advantages of study abroad. You have much to bring to these pages and a great deal to contribute to nursing education in our country.

May I draw your attention to the

Conference topic of discussion : "The correlation of class room and ward teaching". A short paper on this subject is available from Head Office. Ward teaching programmes and suggestions would be a welcome and valuable contribution to the Forum, and may help those institutions, where ward teaching is not done, to develop suitable programmes.

I send you greetings for 1952 and look forward to sharing the Journal with you.

LAKSHMI DEVI,
Editor.

Care of the Patient

The Practical Training of the Nurse by the Ward Sister.

The practical training of the nurse is the most important part of the whole training and much of this responsibility rests on the Ward Sister. It has been said that the Ward Sister is the "Keystone" of the hospital and it is true to say that the reputation of the hospital depends on the type of its practical nursing.

The individual care of the patient should be the greatest concern of all who provide for the needs of the patient, the doctor, the nurse and all other auxiliary staff. On the doctor falls the responsibility of diagnosis, ordering of treatment, and prognosis. It must be remembered that at times diagnosis may be difficult and time is necessary to reach a decision. This waiting time is most trying for the patient and his relatives and may

entail the patient's undergoing numerous and unpleasant tests. Careful observation and reporting all details which may help diagnosis will be appreciated by the doctor, and it is an important duty of the nurses to keep the patient free from anxiety at that time. When the doctor has decided what form the treatment is to take, he then leaves with the nursing staff the responsibility of carrying out that treatment. In leaving the nursing staff the details of the treatment, the doctor does so expecting that it will be faithfully carried out and trusts the nurse to do all that is required. It is up to us to see that our work justifies this trust. In the case of the patient there are two factors which are most important : (1) That the doctor trusts the nurse to fulfil her professional duty

without fail and efficiently and (2) that the patient entrusts his well being and even his life, to her. The nurse's work is only questioned when the nurse-patient professional relationship becomes uncertain.

In practical nursing these facts are so important that they must be impressed on the student nurse. When the patient has full confidence in the nurse looking after him, it makes much difference to his ultimate recovery. He is completely free from anxiety and fear and this hastens his recovery. Once confidence has broken down it is very difficult to restore it again, in fact, nearly impossible.

The position of trust cannot be learned from books. It must be worked for, and once it has been earned every effort must be made to maintain it and this means carefulness in the smallest detail. Mistakes may be made from lack of knowledge and these may be excused, but for carelessness and neglect to carry out orders there is no excuse, and this is the way in which confidence is completely shattered. It is in the hands of trained Sisters and Staff Nurses by professional practice and example of high standards, to teach these things to the student nurses.

We must try to realise how important are the nursing matters in the case of the patient. The care, feeding and toilet of the patient all take time, and time must be given to the nurses in which to do them. No matter what care and trouble has been put into the diagnosis and ordering of treatment, the results largely depend on the nursing care of the patient. We are apt to think of these matters as routine and *worse*, that they can be carried out by the most junior students. But this is entirely wrong. It is disquieting to think that as the nurse becomes more senior she seems to think she has got beyond this stage of important nursing and that trays and trolleys are more important. Trays and trolleys must be prepared and by someone who knows what she is doing, but it is mechanical work; real nursing lies in

making the patient comfortable. The experienced doctor values the nursing which takes the care of the patient seriously, for he realises that it is of first importance.

The nurse must be taught the right attitude to this part of her work and she should be taught by example. Time should be found by Ward Sisters and Staff Nurses fairly frequently, when she can with her junior nurses actually carry out the nursing care, teaching her student as she does it. This is appreciated by the patient and by the student. But the sphere where the nurse really comes into her own is in the care and attention to the patient which is necessary when the prognosis is hopeless and cure impossible. The patient need not be old, many young persons suffer from hopeless conditions. When "nothing else to be done", is the doctor's verdict, the nurse must realise that something can always be done in the nursing line, even for the most hopeless patient and we must take pains to get our student nurses to see this and to learn every possible nursing device which can be used in such cases.

The Ward Sister thus plays a very important part in the training of the student nurse. Her experience, example and influence result in a ward where things run smoothly and where patients are contented and happy. Good theoretical knowledge is essential for, the more a nurse knows the better she can do her work, but theory without practice is not enough for a sick person. Good equipment is essential but it is not the equipment that makes good nursing, it is the spirit and the way in which the equipment is used.

In her book on "The Art of Nursing" Florence Nightingale says, "I honestly believe that it is impossible to learn practical manual nursing from any book, it can only be thoroughly learned in the wards of a hospital". For teaching the student nurse the Sister must have the full co-operation

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