

**The hospital and the superintendent : some practical suggestions and insights / by C. Irving Fisher.**

**Contributors**

Fisher, Chester Irving.  
Royal College of Surgeons of England

**Publication/Creation**

[New York?] : [publisher not identified], [1902]

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/ndytwkm6>

**Provider**

Royal College of Surgeons

**License and attribution**

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by The Royal College of Surgeons of England. The original may be consulted at The Royal College of Surgeons of England. where the originals may be consulted. The copyright of this item has not been evaluated. Please refer to the original publisher/creator of this item for more information. You are free to use this item in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. See [rightsstatements.org](https://rightsstatements.org) for more information.



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

9

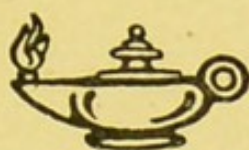
THE HOSPITAL  
AND  
THE SUPERINTENDENT

SOME PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS  
AND INSIGHTS

BY  
C. Irving Fisher, M. D.,

SUPERINTENDENT OF THE PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL,  
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK.





These two papers contain some general thoughts which have crystallized in the mind of the writer during nearly a quarter of a century of hospital experience, three-fourths of the time in the position of Superintendent.

They are offered in the belief that they contain some practical suggestions for Superintendents;—and for Managers, some insight into certain phases of the work which are not readily apparent to those not residing within the hospital walls.

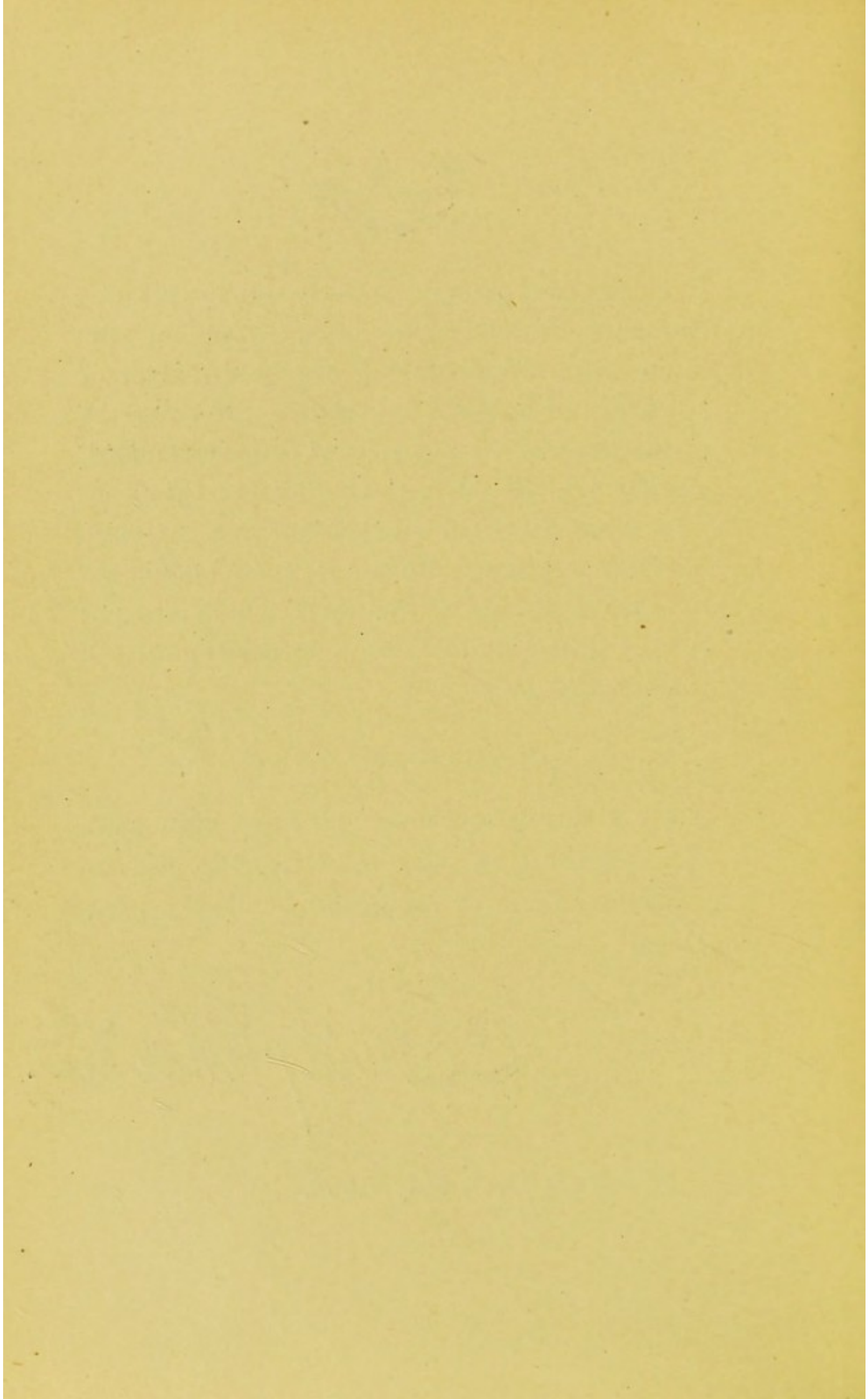
\* \* ALSO \* \*

My greeting to those who have been associated with me in work and have since become superintendents of hospitals or other institutions.

*Colwing Fisher M.D.*

New York City, May, 1902.





## THE HOSPITAL.

An address delivered at the opening of the new  
Lakeside Hospital, Cleveland, Ohio, January 12, 1898.



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2015

<https://archive.org/details/b22397553>



## THE HOSPITAL.

In its origin the hospital was primarily a Christian charity, the first being established during the mediaeval ages for the care of lepers. By a process of development, it has gradually broadened its scope, until to-day its door stands wide open to every class of disease or accident, and by the opportunity for scientific investigation which it affords, it has become an important factor in the wonderfully accelerated advance of medical and surgical knowledge.

From the first, it has furnished practical education for medical students, and more recently its trained nurses have become a necessity in the community at large.

There was a time when to have been a patient in a hospital meant, practically, the same as to have been an inmate of an almshouse, and carried with it a stigma from which every self-respecting individual revolted. To-day rich and poor alike look to it as a city of refuge where they may flee when attacked by destroying disease.

This change in public sentiment has been the result chiefly of two influences, one working from within the hospital and the other from without.



Medical, and still more, surgical practice, has within the last two decades been revolutionized. Modern methods require apparatus and a system of application which the household practitioner however advanced and skilled, cannot command, and needs at instantaneous call a variety of resources which no family however wealthy, can supply. This advance in medical and surgical knowledge and efficiency is itself chiefly the work of the hospital, in its secondary character as a school of science. It rightfully now has the reputation of drawing to itself the brightest physicians and most skilled surgeons, and offering to the patient concentrated wisdom, as well as the most careful nursing under most favorable surroundings.

The family mansion has been largely superseded in the city by the family hotel and the apartment house. These are built and managed, like a merchant vessel, on the supposition that every soul aboard shall be well and on duty three hundred and sixty-five days in the year. A case of severe sickness reveals the fact that there is no place in the home properly to care for the patient, much less to bestow nurses. Isolation and even reasonable quiet is impossible. Not only is the family life upset, but the neighbors are disturbed by the coming and going, and the vapors from the



sick room. Hence it has come about that the greater the wealth of the patient, the more ready he is to take advantage in the hospital, of that which he can find nowhere else; while it is also true that the hospital furnishes to its private patients the best, at far less cost, than must be paid outside, for the nearest possible approach to the best.

But if to the wealthy the hospital is a City of Refuge, to the poor it is as the very Gate of the Kingdom where they may "buy wine and milk"—healing and upbuilding—"without money and without price."

It is the incarnation of practical religion, the ripe fruitage of the Christian spirit in society. In its highest ideal, the hospital should furnish, not healing for the body only, but in its quiet retreat, snatched from the bustle and strain of the daily struggle for existence, the softened and subdued spirit should meet the touch of personal sympathy and Christian love.

To the soul made responsive and susceptible by the ministry of pain, the calm interval of convalescence may be the supreme hour of life,—the golden opportunity for soul healing,—through the mediation of one who, with a hand in the hand of the Divine Savior, with the other reaches down to reclaim the fallen and groping life.

In this religious and philanthropic idea the



hospital was conceived, and so it must ever stand in the esteem of its supporters.

There is, however, another side to hospital life, which to the workers within its walls is the real, tangible, every-day idea. Here the sentiment, never to be ignored, which so naturally rises uppermost in the minds of charity-loving people whenever the hospital is mentioned, must be largely subordinated. The emotions must be kept under, in order that the brain may be clear and the hand steady for the often stern task required of the doctors and nurses. Earnest, whole-souled young men and women though they be, they are human, and are living amid the tragedies of human life.

How could they endure—much less *do* calm, strong, vigorous work, if they lived in ever present consciousness of pain, suffering and wretchedness; if they always remembered that they were dealing with heart broken mothers, wives and husbands, or reckless, fallen men and women? So patients become “cases,” having first of all a scientific interest, and the round of work becomes a business routine.

As seen from within, the hospital is essentially a labor saving organization, and like other organizations is the outgrowth of the advancing demands of social conditions.

“The primary unit of society is the family,” and it was not much longer ago than the time



of our grandfathers when each unit stood practically alone. Within the home and by its own exertions every want of the family was supplied,—it used home-made cloth, home-knit stockings, home-made pies, home-dipped candles; each man raised his own vegetables and meat, and cut his own fire wood.

Energies were taxed to furnish daily necessities, and when sickness invaded the home, the strength of the household must be further strained to nurse the patient as best they might with improvised appliances, and under the direction of a physician whose visits were subject to delays proportionate to the distance at which he lived. The medical and surgical resources at best were crude and meagre, and the only available nurse was of the Sarah Gamp order.

In the train of education and science, with the introduction of one labor saving device after another, in fullness of time, came the hospital of to-day, doing for the family in the care of the sick, what the factories are doing for it in providing food, clothing, light and fuel, in greatest perfection and at minimum of cost. In this sense, the hospital becomes a machine.

Now the first requisite in a machine is that its parts, its combination, its component material shall be adapted to the ends sought,



that the power be sufficient and properly applied.

These in the hospital are the building and its equipment, its corps of physicians and nurses, officers and employees.

We have all watched with admiration amounting almost to reverence, the perfection of skill and power in the printing press, or the looms which roll out yard after yard of fabric of elaborate pattern and finish, while the single operator needs only to pour in the lubricating oil. But, observe, these machines are built of wood and metal, and act under definite physical forces whose laws can be calculated and controlled with mathematical exactness; while the working parts of the hospital machinery are largely composed of human elements, with all their frailty of brain and nerve and muscle, and however carefully selected will show one-sided development and acquired excrescences of mind and temper. And out of these, the powers-that-be are expected to create an organization that shall run on year after year in an endless round of beneficent work. Where is the lubricating oil that shall prevent the frictions which arise through human imperfections, incompetencies, incompatibilities of temper, mistaken judgments, selfish shirking, unwise zeal, hasty thoughtlessness, careless waste?

I ask this from the standpoint of the Super-



intendent who—himself human—must ever stand ready to hear stories of mistake, injustice, discourtesy; who must with calm, even, unruffled temper and wise discrimination, hear witnesses, judge cases, offer explanations, arrange arbitrations, settle disputes, render verdict.

Out of these human defects come those incidents, which are so often unfavorably commented upon by the newspapers, and even by the friends of the Hospital who speak without duly considering the fact that they are accidents, and do not represent the spirit or work of the Hospital. Those inevitable incidents, of which Bret Harte says:

*“Things with no moral purpose,  
Things ez hez got no sense,  
Things ez somehow no profit  
Will cover their first expense.”*

Long familiarity with serious matters in business relations develops, in some persons, a manner which is apparently without feeling. Standing near the door clerk's desk one day, I saw a lady enter, her face bearing evidences of sorrow. This is what I heard: “O, yes, madam, your husband died at ten o'clock last night. The doctors want a post mortem. Please take a seat in the room opposite, and I



will find the doctor." This was spoken very much as the railroad ticket agent tells you what time the train will leave, and suggests that you make room for the next person. The woman stood dazed, while the clerk hastened to find the doctor.

He was a man who rendered efficient and faithful service—accurate and careful in his work—too good an officer to be discharged. We put him on night duty, where the people he meets are chiefly newspaper reporters, who, in New York at least, are not credited with being over-sensitive.

Not very long ago I received a letter from one of our managers. He had just learned that, on the day before, a lawyer was drawing up a will in which the Hospital was to be the recipient of a large amount of money. A telephone message from the lawyer's office had asked if we could not send an annual report or letter-head, something which would have the corporate title of the Hospital upon it. The reply which he got was, "Yes, send us a two-cent stamp, and we will send you one." Our Manager very justly said, "If this is the way our friends are to be treated at the Hospital, we will find it very difficult to keep the friends that we have, or to make others. Will you investigate the matter at once." An investigation showed that such an answer was given by



a young man who had just come into the service of the Hospital as a messenger. He answered the telephone in the temporary absence of those to whom this duty belonged. He was entirely unfamiliar with the relation of the Hospital to the public, or what a "will" might mean to it. Furthermore, the voice which he had heard over the 'phone was the voice of a boy. We learned afterward that the lawyer had not telephoned himself, but had sent his office boy to do so, and between these two boys the Hospital came very near being the sufferer, materially as well as in reputation. Fortunately, the friendship of our Manager prevented such a misfortune.

This recalls the story of the old soldier who, on being reprimanded for swearing, replied: "Yes, colonel, that's all right, but you cannot get all the virtues for thirteen dollars a month."

Let us follow a patient to the ward —, a woman, if you please. It happens that the head nurse is away, and that a new nurse with little experience is obliged to receive the patient. She gives her the usual bath, and arranges her in bed. Later the head nurse comes on duty, and discovers that there are vermin in the hair of the patient, and the new nurse is severely reprimanded for not having more carefully examined the head and applied



the proper lotion. This new nurse is very much impressed that heads are to be looked out for, and firmly resolves that she shall never be open to criticism on that point again.

A few weeks later that nurse receives a patient; this time, a woman scrupulously clean, keenly sensitive, and the protégée of some wealthy person who has an endowed bed in the Hospital. The new nurse does not know these facts, but she remembers her former experience, and the new patient is put to bed with a head drenched with vermicide solution. She submits, but with a sharp sense of indignity and wounded self-respect; in course of time she leaves the Hospital. A few weeks or months later it may be, the Superintendent or Managers are confronted with the question, asked with considerable feeling, "if it is not possible for a respectable woman to be admitted to the Hospital without being treated as if she were a 'low-down East-sider?'"

Not long ago while making an early morning round, I asked a nurse, "What of the night?" The reply was, "Oh, doctor, it has been a splendid night. We have had two deaths, and have admitted a case of pneumonia, a case of typhoid and a case of rheumatism. We have been just as busy as we could be. I like such nights."

This animation would have sounded strange



to unfamiliar ears, but to us it represented an enthusiasm born of courage, a knowledge of what to do and how to do it, and joy in relieving suffering. Such a nurse will ever be an inspiration and hope in every home into which she goes.

Years ago, there was admitted to a Hospital in the City of New York a woman, who had been thrown from her carriage while riding in the Park. She was unconscious; when her relatives called they were not allowed to see her. The House Surgeon, a young man, had learned in his medical studies that people in such a condition should be kept absolutely quiet. He appreciated only the scientific aspect of the case, and being vested with authority from the very nature of his position, he gave orders that no one should be admitted. The patient never became conscious, but died. The friends, naturally enough, felt aggrieved. The result was that some relative, who had already made a will bequeathing a large sum of money to the Hospital, called in the lawyer and cancelled the bequest. You can readily see that, while the friends of this patient had great cause for sorrow, and for their keen sense of having been unjustly dealt with, the act of the House Surgeon did not represent the spirit and usual service of the Hospital, while on his part it was a perfectly innocent mistake, re-



sulting from inexperience.

Every now and then, we find that nurses, as the outgrowth of criticism to which they have been subjected, because of the untidiness of beds, etc., do scold patients for rolling over and pushing up their toes, and otherwise making wrinkles in the bedspread. If this happens once or twice in a year, it probably is reported more times than there are days in the calendar.

There are other incidents, not disastrous but trying, as when the head nurse of a ward, seeing that a swinging bathroom door had been defaced by being kicked open, posted the notice, "Don't push open with your foot." Soon after a probationer came to inquire, "How do you wish me to open that door? Your notice says, 'Don't push. Open with your foot.'"

This new Lakeside Hospital, so perfect in its appointments that it is almost impossible to criticise it, has already made you feel that everything in its operation will be perfect, but do not forget the one hundred more or less employees.

You are dealing with humanity, not only in the public which you serve and the patients whom you treat, but in the make-up of the Hospital administration from the scrub-girl and coal-passer, up through all the grades of its service, to the Managers themselves. In the light of this fact, approach the solution



of its problems and the investigation of its grievances, and let charity control all your judgments.

Managers of this Hospital—from this point of vantage in which for these few moments you have placed me, a Superintendent, allow me a word in behalf of your relations to your Superintendent. He is here to act your will and purpose in the direction of affairs within these walls; but to do this successfully he must be in close touch with you, must feel that he has your confidence.

You are busy men and women of affairs, and cannot all of you give the necessary time to keep a knowledge of the hospital details, but there should be some of you here often, keeping informed in regard to needs, expenditures and incidents, knowing the relations of departments and acquainted with their permanent heads;—to whom the Superintendent may go for counsel, sure that his position will be understood, and through whom he can keep in close touch with the management as a whole.

It devolves upon the Superintendent to catch as fully as possible your spirit and purpose, and to carry this spirit over to his heads of departments, so that they may work together in unison, and in loyalty to you and to the highest interest of the work as a whole.

This harmony, however, can only be ob-



tained by taking the Superintendent into your confidence, conferring with him—that he may understand you, and that you on your part may see the details of work from his point of view. As he is to be held responsible to you for the smooth and steady adjustment of all internal affairs, this responsibility can only be met by your acting through him and making him in fact, as he is in name, your Executive Officer.

Finally:

This Hospital which you to-day dedicate, is one more in the long list of those which in the various cities of our land, are working more directly than any other agency to lessen pain, to prolong life, and to preserve health and vigor.

The benefit to the community of such an institution cannot be estimated wholly by the number of patients received in a year, or the daily average of those treated in the wards. It fills a much larger place than this.

Consider the families worn, burdened and disheartened from which the patient has come, and to which is returned in health and strength, the bread-winner, the care-taker, the beloved child.

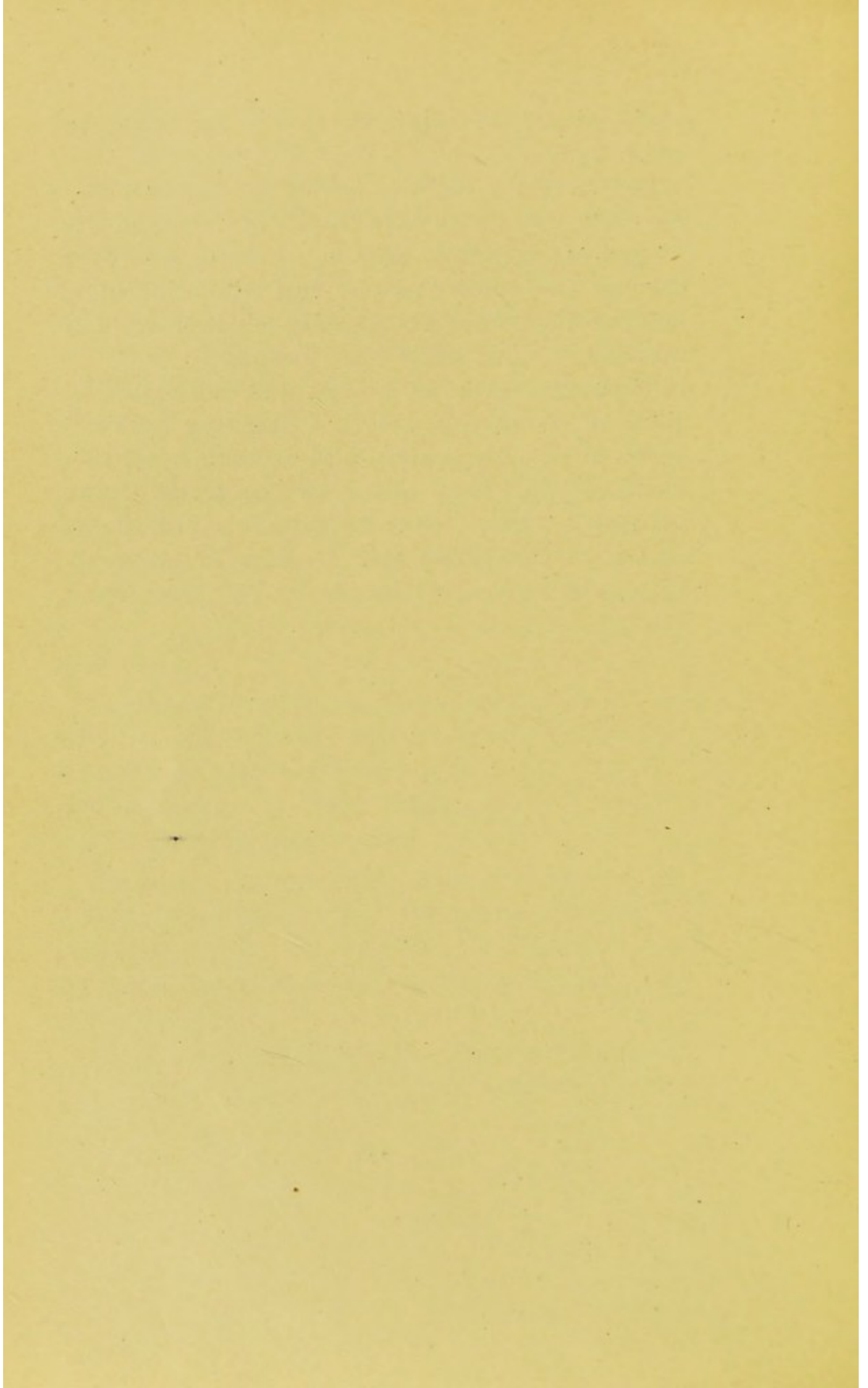
Consider the physicians, keen, alert, skillful through the training here received,—who

shall go out to minister to the suffering in their homes.

Think of the nurses, grown strong and tender through their experience of life and its tragedies, carrying into the homes wherever they go, not comfort alone but education also, leaving the home better able to do for itself because of what they have taught it.

Through them as co-workers with you,—gone out from you, yet still carrying forward your work,—the spirit and influence of this hospital shall flow out, like the river of the prophet's vision, ever broadening and deepening, carrying life and healing, and "everything shall live whithersoever the river cometh."





## THE SUPERINTENDENT HIMSELF.\*

An address delivered at the Third Annual Meeting of the Association of Hospital Superintendents of the United States and Canada, held in New York City, September 10th, 1901.

\*Printed in the National Hospital Record, October 1901,





## THE SUPERINTENDENT HIMSELF.

For measuring the success of anything—an invention—a system of organization—there may be two standards of estimate—viz.: First—Its accomplishment of that end for which it was primarily designed. Second—Its real value to humanity, which may be immeasurably greater, and in entirely different lines from that which was in the thought of the originators.

Likewise the success of the superintendent is to be measured, not alone by the manner in which he performs his official duties, but more broadly and truly, by the sum of his personal influence upon the many and various personalities with whom he daily comes in contact. His official relations may be considered in three groups:

First. His touch with his Board of Managers.

Second. His touch with the public.

Third. His touch with his associates in work.

First. His touch with and relation to the Board of Managers.

The Superintendent is the executive head of



the hospital, the representative of the Board of Managers, under whom he has the general control of all departments and property, and to whom he is responsible for the good order of all its parts and the efficient service of all its officers and employees.

There is a great difference in Boards of Managers, in the extent to which they interest themselves in the organization and work which they are supposed to supervise, in their knowledge of the detail, the personnel, and the spirit pervading the institution. Fortunate is that superintendent, in whose Board are some who have the time for frequent visits, and the wisdom and ability to come in contact with its officers and learn their individualities, without disturbing or interfering with their work. In no way can a Superintendent better strengthen his own hands, than by studying his managers and interesting such to become acquainted with the work, and its strong and weak points.

"The Spirit of the Hospital" should emanate from the Board, and by the Superintendent, as agent, be received and transmitted to every officer and employee. If there is no such spirit, then the Superintendent should by all the wisdom and tact within him, strive to develop it on the highest lines possible, both in the Board and within the hospital.



Let it not be understood that the Superintendent is a mere tool. His own personality may and should be everywhere present. The intelligent knowledge of the whole situation is with him only, and his manner of meeting his managers should be so frank and wise that they will be pleased to receive from him suggestions, confidently trustful of his judgment.

Managers are for the most part men of large business experience. The Superintendent must have some knowledge of many lines of business, and the more he, with judicious selection, draws upon their larger knowledge, the closer will be the mutual sense of confidence.

The spirit of utmost frankness should always exist between the Superintendent and his Board, collectively and individually. When mistakes are made or unfortunate incidents occur, the President of the Board or the "active" member of the committee, should be promptly and fully informed. He should leave no chance for any manager to hear of anything which has gone wrong, before a report has been made to the proper person. Perfect mutual understanding ensures harmonious co-operation.

When a new Superintendent takes charge of an old or already organized hospital he some-



times finds rules or customs which, in his opinion, will seriously hamper his control of persons and service. His past experience has been under a different organization, and one more in accord with generally accepted views of superintendents. His first impulse is to demand a change, giving him more authority, etc.

Let me suggest that some of us whose heads have grown gray with experience, and other things, have found it quite possible to conduct successfully an institution, the printed rules and regulations of which contain clauses suggesting friction, and quite at variance with our views of good organization in the abstract.

For instance, some institutions require that certain heads of departments shall be selected and appointed by the Board of Managers. This opens possibilities of evil not pleasant to contemplate.

Let the new Superintendent remember that his managers are men of long business experience, and they are not prepared summarily to change an organization which has been operated successfully, at the request of a new and untried executive; for, whatever the success of a Superintendent in a former position, there is still the "Hazard of a New Fortune" in the work he has just undertaken. Managers know this and watch with anxiety the spirit and progress of an institution in



the hands of a new officer. The better part of wisdom is to "study the situation," make the existing organization a success; or, by the large success of most of it, prove the weakness of the obnoxious points. When this has been accomplished, needed changes will come naturally and easily.

In the New England States the Superintendent has also medical responsibilities, consequently must be a physician. Westward his duties are almost entirely business and executive. I am confident, however, that the professional knowledge and experience is a valuable addition to the Superintendent's equipment, and if wisely used, brings him into more harmonious relations with the medical staff, both visiting and interne, and puts him in a position to better interpret to them the "spirit of the Hospital," which is the spirit of the Board of Managers.

This knowledge also enables him to appreciate much of the needs, the uses and abuses of the material equipment of the hospital, and gives him a larger influence with patients and their friends.

The Superintendent need not be in haste in demanding to be sustained on points of discipline or questions of difference with his associate officers. It must be remembered that the members of the Board of Managers do not re-



side in the hospital, are not familiar with details nor with the individuals concerned, and their decision in a given case may not have been the best for good discipline. Still, let him "study the situation," and, when sufficient time has passed and the accumulating evidence of disorder has made a stronger case, he may again place his cause in the hands of those managers who best appreciate the situation. Thus the final vindication and support will be greater and more secure than could possibly have come before.

Second. The Superintendent's relation to the public, the patients, their friends, the supporters of the Hospital, newspaper men, whether in appreciative or critical mood.

I once heard Bishop Vincent say that we know very little of Heaven, and notwithstanding all that we hear about it is very favorable, every man is ready to spend his last dollar and suffer much in trying to keep out of it.

So the patient often comes to the Hospital as a last resort, with reluctance and forebodings; the friends are worn out with care and burdened with anxiety. They should be met with an air of hopefulness and confident assurance. So far as possible, the Superintendent should give such his personal attention. His conversation, overheard by his assistants, should be an education and a model for them,



when in his absence they must act in his stead.

The refined and cultivated patient who must be assigned to the ward, meets inevitable conditions which are trying and may be repulsive. A few words of explanation and encouragement will often tide the anxious patient over that most trying first forty-eight hours in the Hospital.

Philanthropic people, both real and spasmodic, often come with very erroneous ideas of the scope of the hospital work, and the limitations of its field of charity, and are much offended because their patient is not admitted. These must not be allowed to go away angry. Usually, with tactful handling and patient explanation, they need not. The office should be able to furnish them with full information concerning other hospitals, homes or sanitariums which may provide what they need, and send them on their quest helped and hopeful.

Again, the Superintendent is occasionally met by a perfect tirade of abuse concerning some nurse, orderly or clerk for neglect of duty, cruelty or discourtesy. It is worse than useless to combat such people. Let them be rather encouraged to free their minds and tell all,—thank them for calling attention to the matter, assure them that no apologies are offered for wrong-doing—that the matter will be



thoroughly investigated—that just criticisms are welcome and helpful. When a calmer mood has been gained, as the result of this unhindered flow of speech, the complainer may be told what the spirit of the Hospital is, in regard to care, kindness and courteous consideration; that the managers are trying to do the Master's work, but that they are doing it pretty much as the Master did, by means of men and women who are human, and that every now and then some tired Peter or a Judas gets to the front and does the thing not expected or permitted. Then the question may be put, whether in the office or home of the complainant, things do not sometimes happen which misrepresent the spirit of it, and are to be regretted? Such a reasonable presentation of the matter rarely fails of the desired result.

Especially trying at times are the newspaper reporters. The present methods of journalism, if such loose system may be called method, cause these men to be aggressive and obtrusive, not always justly representing themselves, I am sure. The Superintendent must decide, sometimes with advice, what information should be furnished and give it frankly; with equal frankness and gentlemanly decision, he must decline to discuss or furnish more. Such bearing commands respect, and, in the long run, reduces annoyances from this



source to a minimum.

Third. His relation to his associates in work.

Within the memory of some here, the Hospital has grown from a place simply for the care of the sick, and has become a great educational institution. This has brought into it workers of intelligence, strength and refinement; has increased the Superintendent's opportunity, and has made his work, as a profession, correspondingly larger and more satisfactory.

He is of necessity a student of character, and his success in this field is shown in the character of those whom he gathers about him. His co-workers are human, and he often has to be content with indifferent ability and lack of symmetry in mental development, but there should never be a doubt as to the real moral character or integrity of purpose of any important officer.

A well known business man in this city once said to me, "I never now keep a person in my employ, of whom I have become suspicious; once I did, thinking it an injustice to discharge a man against whom I had no tangible proof of wrong. The proof always came sooner or later, involving the loss of much money; of late years I have accepted my intuitions without cause for regret."



The individuality of each worker should be recognized. We are not all fitted for the same groove, and all accomplish better work with less wear and tear, if allowed all possible freedom of action and thought. Consequently, it is wise to make rules and prescribe methods only where uniformity is a necessity; and encourage originality and invention even when suspected to be in the interest of laziness, if it does not interfere with or delay necessary results. Methods may be elastic, though results must be insisted upon.

The Superintendent should be approachable by all associated with him. Every head of department should be so handled that it will be the most natural thing to come to him with all questions of doubt, all mistakes, all unusual incidents. Many an imminent trouble has been averted by timely suggestion thus made possible.

To heads of departments and nurses I always say when they begin their duties, "Don't forget my specialty—trouble of all sorts, and how to handle unpleasant people, and things. Don't wait for the trouble to come, just tell me when you think it is coming, then is the time I can help you the most." I have often seen the burden go out of the face of the young woman just taking charge of a ward for the first time, when this assurance has been given.



His relation to the house staff is one of the most serious of the Superintendent's problems. These young men have come to the hospital with but one thought—the professional one. They have had no experience with institution organization; they do not think of themselves as part of a great machine, whose movements are disordered by every irregularity of their own. Every requirement non-professional, whether it relate to the hours for meals, the going out and coming in, the entertaining of guests or the social relations to those within the walls, seems quite subordinate and unimportant.

They have come with minds keenly alive to the theoretical application of modern apparatus and methods of treatment, and expect unlimited provision for their professional experiment—questions of expense or economy in the use of the hospital supplies rarely suggesting themselves to their consciousness. Just here, the Superintendent who is himself a physician and has served an apprenticeship as a member of a house staff, has a vast advantage. He can see the situation from their standpoint as well as his own, and present arguments which appeal to their reason as he could not do, if he had never been in their place.

We have a custom in the Presbyterian Hos-



pital which goes far in setting men right on these points. Just before the members-elect are to enter upon their duties, they are required to come before the Executive Committee and matriculate. The President extends to them the cordial greeting of the Board of Managers, and defines to them their relations to the various departments, particularly the non-professional. As they are handed a copy of the Rules and Regulations, they are told that "The Superintendent is the executive officer of the Board of Managers, and the interpreter of these Rules and Regulations, and is to be respected accordingly." These suggestions are also made known to the attending physicians and surgeons, and their co-operating influence has been hearty and helpful. For some questions which arise, the simple suggestion of personal influence, that the man is setting a bad example, is not acting in accord with the "spirit of the Hospital," has oftentimes been an efficient reminder of duty.

The Superintendent should be an observer of good works. If it is true that "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," it is quite as true that all criticism and no approval makes discouraged officers and employees. To be sure, the Superintendent must lie awake nights trying to devise methods to reduce waste, to bring thoughtless and indifferent people to a



reasonable efficiency, to prevent the doing of things wrong which could more easily be done right, wishing for more of the Message-to-Garcia type of men and women. In the state of mind thus developed, he is too prone to overlook the silent, patient, conscientious worker. I shall never forget the joy in the face of a head nurse to whom I had sent a note of approval for a work accomplished under certain trying and exacting conditions. Said she, "You have no idea what this means to me, Dr. Fisher; I didn't know that you ever saw us working hard." I wondered how many others had passed on unhelped for lack of my notice and word of approval.

Let us remember, too, that the Pharaoh who could recognize and use a Joseph found a valuable helper, and brought credit to his kingdom.

The world of the ordinary porter and scrubber is very narrow, and a pleasant personal notice by the Superintendent means correspondingly more; also heads of departments will deal more carefully with employees whose good work has been observed by him. It is well to ask heads of departments, who in their service are doing well, and who would be helped by a word of notice, lest those who render eye-service deceive, as did the printer in the Herald house. You have heard the story. Mr. Bennett inspects his great business from time



to time. On one of these occasions an employee in the press room had a black eye and other discolorations, giving evidence of a disgraceful night before. Fearing these marks would cause his dismissal, he touched the places with printer's ink just before Mr. Bennett's arrival, and applied himself assiduously to his work. After the visit he was called to the office, to which he went with fear and trembling. Mr. Bennett questioned him as to the length of his service, his family, etc., and then said: "Mr. Foreman, you had better raise this man's salary; really, he is the only man in the place that looks as if he were doing anything."

Many are the human moods which come under the Superintendent's touch. The nurse, who entered upon her course of training with purpose and hope, has been obliged to give it up, and is overwhelmed with disappointment and perchance a sense of disgrace because of her insufficiency.

A few months ago a nurse called at my office, who had been obliged to leave our school because of inability to meet its exacting demands. She had been directed to another hospital in which she had succeeded. Speaking of her experience with us she said: "The words which you said to me as I went out of this hospital three years ago have come to me often, and have helped me through many a trial." She

repeated a conversation which I could not recall, which suggests that the Superintendent may be helping or disheartening others most when he least thinks of it.

To recognize these various moods, to carry habitually an atmosphere of cheerfulness and of appreciative encouragement, to leave each tired worker whom he touches in his rounds stronger and braver because of his momentary presence, is the Superintendent's privilege.





