

physicians, a circular was issued by the Poor Law Board, recommending that the numerous able-bodied women in workhouses should be trained in the Infirmarys, and sent out as Nurses. Considering the character, as a rule, of this class of women, it was perhaps a happy thing for the public that the plan was never carried out. But it shewed how grievous the want of trained and efficient Nurses had become, to render such a proposition feasible. Things, however, have advanced since then, and we see to-day women of all ranks and conditions anxious to enrol themselves in the list of trained Nurses. There can be no doubt that, to the great majority of feminine minds, nursing as a profession offers a very attractive prospect. It has the merit of being within the reach of all, and requires no expensive outlay. Fitness of disposition, good health, and sound common sense, as a rule, is the only capital required. Knowledge and skill is only to be acquired by patient work and faithful service, for, in Nursing, as in every other work, to produce of results, nine-tenths must be drudgery. No woman, however intelligent, could be expected to know intuitively how to compress the femoral artery any more than she could be expected to paint a landscape or play the violin. It is essentially an art, and must be learnt as one.

The daily increasing desire on the part of medical men for the assistance of professional Nurses, has created a very large demand. One unfortunate result of this has been to tempt into the labour market a very large supply of inefficient and imperfectly trained women who bring much discredit and odium on the profession. It is no uncommon thing for a woman who may have picked up a smattering of experience among her friends, or who has been a month or two in a Hospital, to put on a cap and apron and pass herself off as a trained Nurse. A case in point occurred not long ago, when a gentleman's cook, after a couple of month's sojourn as a patient in an Infirmary, took such a fancy to nursing from her somewhat subjective experience of it, that, after her discharge, she announced her intention henceforth of abandoning the kitchen and taking up nursing as a means of livelihood. This is no isolated case—it is only an example of scores like it. The pay is very good for women like these, who have had no expenditure of time or trouble in learning their work. Now it is very evident that something should be done to protect the public against ignorant and untrustworthy persons of this type. To the Royal British Nurses' Association belongs the credit of first drawing attention to the scandals and irregularities that must arise from the employment of imperfectly

trained women as Nurses for the sick; and by its insistence on a certain uniformity of training and strict inquiry into the personal antecedents of all its members, has done most valuable service both to the public and the cause of nursing which it so ably represents. This Association was formed about six years ago, and is one of the largest and most important unions of professional women in the world. Its aim is "to unite Nurses for their mutual aid and protection, and for the advancement in every way of their professional work." Then there is a register kept on which any woman fulfilling the necessary qualifications, can be placed if she so desires, and, at a glance, full information can thus be obtained of the length and locality of her training. The school in which a Nurse learns the principles of her art is either a Hospital or Infirmary. To these she may be admitted either as a paying or special, or as a paid or ordinary probationer. Some take the former only, others the latter, and a few admit both classes. As a rule, the paying probationer enters for a course of not less than three months' training, for which, including board and lodging, she pays twelve to thirteen guineas, which is equivalent to a little over 68 dollars. On completion of that period, if her work and conduct has been satisfactory, she is encouraged to continue on the same terms for as many additional three months as she wishes; or, if she prefers it, she may, on the occurrence of a vacancy, be transferred to the ordinary staff of the institution, supposing it to be one of the description which takes the two classes. The paid probationer differs from the paying probationer, inasmuch as upon her entrance, she binds herself by an agreement to serve the institution for one, two, three or more years, according to the regulations in force at that particular school. A certificate is granted on completion of the time specified; but as there is no uniformity of time or standard required—every institution, good, bad, or indifferent, has an equal right to award their Nurses this passport to public confidence. It stands to reason that the certificate given by a small and insignificant Hospital after one year's training, cannot be of the same value as that granted by a large general Hospital on the completion of three years' training. But as things are at present, the Nurse in each case has an equal right to call herself a certificated Nurse, and who is to discriminate between their respective merits—certainly not an unprofessional and unreflecting public. Such an example as this must alone show the imperative necessity that exists for a Register of trained Nurses. Anyone can then see at a glance the qualifications possessed by any particular

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