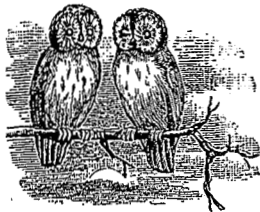


Matrons in Council.

WHAT IS A TRAINED NURSE?

What should constitute an efficient preliminary education, and how should it be obtained?



IT will now perhaps be well to summarise the views which our valued correspondents have expressed upon this question, during the past two months, in this column. As we have found hitherto in connection with these discussions, a wide difference of opinion has been expressed upon points of detail. But we gather that there is a unanimous feeling that Probationers ought to pass through some preliminary training before they are admitted into the wards of a Hospital. From which it may be inferred that it is equally felt that such training should be efficient because, were it not so, it would be useless, if not detrimental, to the learner.

But when we descend to details, the divergence of opinion of which we have spoken, becomes at once very marked. We ventured to divide the subjects of the education necessary for a Probationer into three classes: (A) General; (B) Domestic; and (C) Scientific.

Miss DE PLEDGE would not insist on a high standard of general education for Probationers, on the ground that by so doing, women who had not had the advantages of a first-class school instruction might be excluded from a vocation for which they might have a special talent. Other correspondents, notably Miss ISLA STEWART and Miss MOLLETT, consider that Probationers should have received educational advantages without which, they argue with much force, they will be unfitted to comprehend their scientific professional teaching. Between the two views, probably, we must look for the correct answer. It appears to us that as the science of Nursing grows, it will become more and more impossible for women of insufficient education to master its details, and that, therefore, the school educational standard required from Probationers will inevitably tend to rise. But, on the other hand, this will either raise the whole body of the profession to one level, which, we confess, we think very improbable, or it will create a marked differentiation of the profession into two or more grades, followed in all probability by the enhancement of the reputation of certain Nursing Schools which will then adopt a very high standard, and will probably furnish from amongst their pupils the Lady Superintendents and leaders of the future, while the rank and file of the profession, who will obtain easier admittance into Schools with a lower grade, will find greater difficulty subsequently in securing high place in the Nursing world.

This outlook furnishes ground for reflection, and these and further possible consequences cannot be regarded with unmixed satisfaction.

As to the advantages of domestic training, all our correspondents seem fairly agreed; but with regard to a preliminary knowledge in the scientific part of a Nurse's work, Miss DE PLEDGE and Miss LANDALE differ from other writers, and from each other—the former believing that such theoretical knowledge would be best acquired in a Hospital with its practical application under the eyes of the learner. Others argue, with much force, and we confess to our agreement with them, that if the Probationer has some prior acquaintance with Anatomy, Physiology, and so forth, her understanding of the details of disease is from the first made easier, and her mind is left free, especially during her first and second years in the wards, to apply itself entirely to practical matters.

The next question on our list is:—

- 4.—For what length of time should a Probationer be trained in the wards of a Hospital? and how should that training be organized in order to fit her to hold every position in the profession?

National Health Society.

*President:—*HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER, K.G.



THE sixth and last Lenten lecture was delivered at the Committee-room of the above Society on Wednesday, 21st inst., at 4 p.m., the subject being—"Tea, Coffee, and Cocoa—how to choose, how to make and how to drink them." During and after the lecture practical exemplifications were given of the varieties of beverages described, and the methods of preparing them.

On March 21st, Miss Dunbar held an examination at the Borough Road Polytechnic for the students who have followed an Ambulance course, and elementary certificates were granted.

Miss Annie E. Morgan has been very successful in her Homely Talks and First Aid lectures at Lincoln, where spontaneous testimony to the interest excited by her instructions has been furnished by working women among her audiences, who have, of their own accord, written to thank her.

A third issue of "Our Sick, and how to take care of them," by Miss Florence Stacpoole, one of the National Health Society's lecturers, is about to be published by Messrs. Cassell & Co. Copies can be obtained at the Committee-room of the Society, or at all booksellers, for the price of 1/-.

The illustrations to "Our Sick" have been found very useful by the Society's County Council lecturers, in showing their audiences how to wring flannels for fomentations and perform other practical acts.

A new edition by the same publishers has also appeared of Miss Stacpoole's "Advice to women on the care of health before, during and after confinement."

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