

Superintendents' Convention, Baltimore, February, 1897.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED IN THE DIRECTION OF A UNIFORM CURRICULUM.

BY M. W. MCKECHNIE,

*Superintendent Wilkes-Barre City Hospital Training School
for Nurses.*

AN attempt has been made, in the preparation of this paper, to present a report of the methods of work and plan of teaching in the various training schools represented by the members of this society in the United States and Canada, and has been undertaken with a view of finding out what degree of uniformity exists, and how the general plan of instruction compares with the conditions laid down in the report of the committee on this subject, recommended and approved by this society at its last meeting. The information has been taken from the reports sent in response to a list of printed questions addressed to those members who are at present occupying positions as superintendents of training schools.

The number of superintendents written to was	66
Number of answers received	58
Number of American training schools ...	51
Number of Canadian	7
In the State of New York alone reports were received from schools	13
In Pennsylvania from	10
In Massachusetts from	6
In New Jersey from	5
In Illinois from	3
In Michigan from	3
In Ohio from	2

The remaining nine were scattered throughout the different sections of the United States:—Eastern Section, 3; Southern, 4; Central, 1; Western, 1.

The principal points dwelt upon are: The preliminary qualifications for entrance to training schools; length of course of training; division of time for practical experience in the various branches of nursing; curriculum of teaching and study; length of scholastic year with length of terms; specified times for the admission of pupils and vacations; examinations; entrance, primary and final; examiners and methods of examining; grading in practical work and conduct; final examinations and percentage required before receiving a diploma.

In order to give a better idea of the plan of instruction in these 58 schools, I have arranged them in three classes:—

(1) Those connected with hospitals having 150 beds or more.

(2) Those connected with hospitals having less than 75 beds and not more than 140.

(3) Those connected with hospitals having less than 75 beds.

Schools of the first class.—Twenty-eight schools are represented in this class. The largest school has 150 pupils to 1,200 beds, a ratio of one pupil to eight and two-third patients; the smallest has 18 pupils to 150 beds, a ratio of one nurse to eight and one-third patients.

Length of Course.—Twelve of these schools require

a three-year course of instruction; two have a three-year course in view, and 14 require a two-year course; of these schools giving a three-year course nine are connected with hospitals having from 200 to 1,200 beds.

Practical Work.—From 21 schools reports of the division of the pupils' time for practical work were received. In all of these the practical experience included medical, surgical and gynæcological nursing, but each school seemed to be a law unto itself in the length of time allowed for each service. In 12 schools having a three-years' course, one allows 12 months for medical nursing; one, 10; two, 9; one, 8; one, 7½; four, 6; one, 4; one, 3. For surgical nursing one school allows 16 months; one, 10; two, 8; one, 7½; one, 7; five, 6. In gynæcological nursing one school allows 7 months; two, 6; one, 5; two, 4; one, 3; three, 2. One school combines surgical and gynæcological nursing and allows 10 months. In considering these facts it is well to remember that the largest hospital may not always offer nursing experience in the greatest number of services; also, that a hospital of 150 beds may have every variety of cases, and that the difference in the number of patients in the different services in large and small hospitals is to be borne in mind. One school giving a three-years' course allows four months in the children's ward; another affords a large experience in the nursing of contagious diseases.

DIVISION OF TIME IN SCHOOLS REQUIRING TWO YEARS' COURSE.

Reports were received from nine schools. For medical nursing two schools allow 10 months; three, 9; three, 8; one, 3. For surgical nursing one school allows 14 months; one, 12; one, 9; two, 8; two, 3. For gynæcological nursing four schools allow 3 months; two, 2; two schools combine surgical and gynæcological nursing, and allows 14 and 10½ months respectively.

The usual course of training offered by the most advanced schools in this country includes, besides experience in the nursing of medical, surgical and gynæcological patients, obstetrics, experience in the care of private patients in hospitals, practical instruction in massage and invalid cookery, and frequently nursing in contagious diseases.

The number of schools in this class giving instruction in all these branches is three. The number giving in addition to medical, surgical and gynæcological nursing, practical experience in obstetrics is 12; the number giving private ward experience is 6; number giving instruction in cooking for the sick, 23; instruction in massage, 15; experience in contagious wards, 8.

Special nursing in hospitals is usually considered preparatory experience for private nursing in so far as the duties, hours, and in a measure, the responsibilities of the nurse are concerned; but the sending of pupils out to private patients and to district work is not generally recognised as a part of the course of training; yet we find the practice still exists to some extent. From the reports received at least four schools in this class continue to do so, in one giving a three-years' course of instruction, and in three giving two years. In two schools, additional time has been affixed to the prescribed course of two years for special practical instruction. In one two months for district work, and another offers a post-graduate course of six months for

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)