

more invitations to afternoon tea than she can possibly accept, and if known to be tired and overworked, many pleasant drives are given her. The hospital Matron has also her trials and difficulties, but with this great difference, that she is directly responsible to the governing board for the satisfactory administration of her own department, and has the selection of all subordinate officers, subject to the approval of her visiting Committee.

To be brief, in the one case everything is done to help the worker, and to call forth her best efforts for the Institution she serves, in the other, nothing at all.

She is expected to minister to the sick with zeal and devotion, to direct those working under her with tact and discretion, and to satisfy her own heart cravings for a little brightness and sympathy as best she can.

Could any position be more isolated or unsatisfactory? Is it any wonder that after two or three months of battling against such adverse circumstances, she throws the whole thing up in despair and warns her nurse-friends against adventuring themselves in similar positions.

Seeing then, that the supply of subordinate officers cannot possibly meet the demand for County Workhouses, and that trained nurses will not undertake duties impossible of fulfilment, nor submit to the social ostracism incidental to the position, it becomes a grave question as to how these difficulties can be best surmounted.

Two suggestions have been made within the past twelve months by eminently practical women thoroughly conversant with Poor Law Administration.

The first advocated by Miss Louisa Twining is, that the nursing of Poor Law Infirmaries should be undertaken by the State.

The second, suggested by Miss Gibson, Matron of the Birmingham Workhouse Infirmary, that the large Poor Law Training Schools should train for the small Workhouses.

Now, with regard to the first suggestion, it is, I believe, generally admitted by those best qualified to judge, that the time has come, when the nursing of our Workhouse Infirmaries should form a distinct department under the Local Government Board, and that some recognised status, as in the Naval, Military and Indian Army Nursing Services, should be given to the many highly trained and cultured women, who are spending the best years of their lives in the Poor Law nursing service. Individual effort has done much to raise the tone of Workhouse Infirmaries, but unless State aid be quickly forthcoming in the present crisis, there is every probability that the whole system of nursing as at present in force will retrograde instead of advance.

The suggestion that the large Infirmaries should train for the small was formulated in a Paper read by Miss Gibson before the West Midland Poor Law Conference, held at Malvern in May last, and has opened up a wide field for discussion.

The admirable Paper read by Miss Wilkie, Lady Superintendent of the Halifax Infirmary, at the Yorkshire Poor Law Conference held in November, on Workhouse nursing, the training of nurses generally, and how the difficulties of training nurses for small workhouses can be overcome, has aroused much interest in professional circles, but unfortunately in the Poor Law Journals adverse criticism.

Miss Wilkie urges the adoption of a Uniform Standard of training which should be directed by a Nursing Department of the Local Government Board, composed of professional and lay members who should formulate a general scheme of training in detail, and also be an examining body. The period of training she would extend to *four years*, and some portion of this time should be spent in the smaller workhouses.

Miss Wilkie suggests that no salary should be given for the first *two years*, but that board, lodging, washing, and uniform should be provided and training fees charged. But in order that suitable women might not be debarred from entering the service, scholarships should be established, the funds for the provision of such scholarships to be acquired by capitation grants to each training school. During the two last years of probation, salaries should be paid, and further development of character and power of organisation specially encouraged.

That there is great diversity of system in our training schools cannot be denied, and much heart-burning as to the relative value of the different certificates granted by the several training schools, beyond question.

But in my opinion the true test of a certificate emanating from whatever institution it may, is its commercial value. In other words, the position its holder can command in the Nursing world.

If we trace the record of our Poor Law training schools during the past two years, we shall find, that our nurses have gone out and worked side by side with others trained in the best General Hospitals. They have been accepted by the Secretary of State for Plague Service in India, as Charge Nurses under the Metropolitan Asylums Board, as Assistant Matrons, and Superintendent Nurses in kindred Institutions, as District Nurses in connection with Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute, and as Private Nurses attached to the best London and Provincial Nursing Co-operations.

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