

earnest, thinking women, liberal and fair minded, sound in ethics and efficient as executives.

In my section of the South, where as yet there has been little progress beyond the decidedly primitive training school, the average physician, knowing nought of nursing ethics, has a decided inclination, upon limited experience with her, to snub the intelligent, well-trained nurse as a possible usurper of the doctor's prerogatives.

This leads nurses to value exceedingly all that will prove a power for the advancement of nursing, as active, well-organized Alumnae Associations must do.

It has been my custom, as a Superintendent, to organize among my pupils a club, much along the lines described by Miss Walker. But I have encouraged the pupil-nurses to invite physicians and graduate nurses of experience, to read papers upon subjects of special interest, and also upon the lives, character, and work of prominent members of the nursing and medical professions. All journals and other literature relative to the advancement and interests of the profession are put into their hands and discussed with them.

An hour or two, once or twice a month, is devoted to informal discussion of nursing ethics, with the Senior and Junior classes, respectively.

Both pupil and graduate nurses are encouraged to keep in touch with current events, music, art, etc., if for no higher motive than to be more companionable for patients, to the exclusion of conversation of the gossipy, ill-advised sort.

### Nursing Legislation.

THE "Trained Nurse" reports that the Legislative Committee on Labour, heard at the State House in Boston, on the morning of March 8th, a Bill providing that no nurse shall be allowed to work in any hospital, public or private, more than twelve hours a day, or be allowed to sleep in a room in which, or in one adjoining and connecting with one in which, a patient sleeps.

John C. Gordon, of Brookline, said the Bill and petition were urged by the Society of Nurses, who thought a uniform custom ought to be established in the State. In some institutions, he said, nurses are compelled to work practically twenty-four hours a day for weeks and months at a time.

Mrs. Hulda L. Loomis, of Cambridge, also appeared in favour of the Bill. Mrs. Loomis said it seemed to her evident that nurses are now overworked; that it was time to dispel the popular illusion that nurses are possessed of any special or particular amount of endurance.

Dr. Edward Cowles, Superintendent of the McLean Asylum, was the first remonstrant. He

said the average hours of service for nurses in the McLean Hospital were about ten hours a day, and in the Massachusetts General Hospital about eleven hours. He thought these hours were exceeded in few, if any, hospitals. The true answer to the proposition of the Bill is that the modern nurse practises a profession. She is an educated person, trained professionally for her work, and her compensation is in accordance. When a nurse goes to a hospital now she goes for the training she gets. When she graduates from the hospital she becomes a member of the profession of trained nurses. "You might as well say that the house officers and young physicians in our hospitals shall work not more than twelve hours a day."

Dr. Howard, Superintendent of the Massachusetts General Hospital, and a number of professional nurses, opposed the Bill.

WE do not think that the care of the sick can be legislated for to the minute, as is possible in the mechanical labour of the artisan or factory worker. Members of a profession are more or less the servants of the public, not the personal employer, and interference with the liberty of the subject, follows close on industrial legislation. Brain workers resent, as unjust, interference with their hours of work, which cannot be controlled without financial loss. It has been found possible to reduce the working hours of pupil nurses in many well managed hospitals to nine, and, in some instances, eight hours a day, but who is prepared to legislate for restricting the hours which the Matrons devote to duty, sometimes amounting to sixteen hours a day, to say nothing of rounds of inspection during the night?

WE only know of a few hospitals where the Matron has adopted the system of office hours—say from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., leaving substitutes in charge of her department at all other times, and our experience is that the system is an inefficient one, bad for the discipline of the nursing staff, and not productive of the most efficient system of nursing the sick.

In private nursing, again, most societies have certain rules and regulations for the protection of the health of the nurse; but we honestly affirm that no private nurse is a success who performs her duties by the strike of the clock, rather than by intelligent observation of the condition of her patient. Nursing is an art which requires regulating by the heart, as well as the head. It is, therefore, doubly difficult to regulate by law.

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