

her mother. Under these circumstances there can be no doubt that she was entitled to a testimonial which would enable her to obtain other work in the future, and we are glad that Mr. Brown carried his point, and think that the nurse is to be congratulated on his advocacy of her cause. When a nurse has done good work, and has resigned her post for reasons beyond her own control, she may reasonably expect a reference from the committee of the institution. If, on the other hand, she has only been a bird of passage, staying for a few months, and then moving on from a desire to change, a committee is justified in stating that she has only been in its service for a short time; and in referring enquirers to the authorities of the institution from which she came to them for more particular information concerning her.

The question of testimonials is at all times a vexed one, and the way in which their value varies is probably best known to the Superintendent of Nurses. For instance, a nurse may be leaving an institution without her certificate. She applies to a medical man, in whose ward she has worked, for a testimonial. If he is wise, he consults the Matron before promising this; but it may happen that, in the kindness of his heart, he promises to write one, and, basing his estimate of her upon his observance of the nurse's dexterity in the ward, and believing that every nurse in his own particular hospital is excellently trained, he writes a flourishing testimonial to the effect that "Nurse — is one of the very best nurses he has ever known." Another more wary member of the same staff consults the Matron, with the result that he leaves her saying: "No, I would rather not give a testimonial. If you had told me that Nurse — was satisfactory, I would gladly have done so; but I like my testimonials to be worth something." This brings out a point which may well be emphasised, namely, that if a testimonial is carelessly given, and the nurse proves unsatisfactory subsequently, injury is probably caused to the donor.

Lastly, it should be a rule in every hospital, cordially endorsed by the medical staff for their own protection as well as a matter of justice to the public, and to nurses who have earned their certificates, that no testimonials be given to nurses who have left before completing the term of training, otherwise a nurse, who for various reasons is unsatisfactory, may be launched on an independent career equipped with a bundle of flourishing but ill-advised testimonials.

## Annotations.

### THE TRAINED NURSES UNITED AID SOCIETY OF AMERICA.

WE are glad to see that a mutual benefit association for the benefit of American nurses in time of sickness has been organised on self-respecting lines. The name of the Association is the "Trained Nurses' United Aid Society of America," and it has received the signature of Governor Roosevelt, authorising its formation and prescribing the government. The Society is the outcome of the Metropolitan Trained Nurses' Club, New York, and it has the advantage of being launched on its career without expenses of any kind except the salary of a book-keeper and the necessary printing. The offices are given by the manager, Mrs. Hatch Willard, and all the officers give their services. Every trained nurse in the United States of good health and good standing is eligible for membership. Its objects are the relief of trained nurses who are detained from duty on account of illness or accident, and the payment of a funeral benefit in case of death. It also aims to secure, by means of co-operation and combination, substantial benefits for its members, such as homes of rest, pecuniary loans in case of temporary distress, a sickness fund, endowed beds, and eventually pensions. A table of monthly dues for participating members has been drawn up. The initiation fee is two dollars, and to provide five dollars a week for six weeks in any one year, in case of sickness prior to the age of 65, together with 50 dollars at death, it is necessary to subscribe at the following rates: age 25 years and under, 40 cents a month; 30 years, 45 cents a month; 35 years, 50 cents a month; 40 years, 55 cents a month; 45 years, 65 cents a month; and 50 years, 80 cents a month.

Those who join the Society between any of these ages are allowed to pay the rate of the lower age until they attain the higher age, and thereafter pay the rate proper for the higher age.

We shall watch with interest the working of this Society.

### WHY NURSE?

WE desire once more to draw attention to the loose way in which the term "nurse" is used to describe all sorts and conditions of persons. An inquest was recently held by Mr. Walter Schroder, at St. Pancras Coroner's Court, on an infant who died while in the care of Mrs. Fiddler, the wife of a pianoforte maker, and

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