

thoroughly trained nurses. The greatest diversity of opinion exists as to what this means. More recognition of the principle of development in the science and practice of nursing is desirable. There is, as yet, no recognised, accepted, general standard of attainment for certificated nurses, corresponding, for example, to that for teachers or University students. A teacher who holds a diploma, or a student who has taken a University degree, must have followed a fixed minimum course of training, the value of which and the subjects of which any one who takes the trouble to enquire may easily ascertain. Such knowledge is especially valuable with regard to medical degrees.

Nurses, however well trained, however efficient physically, mentally and morally, will never obtain either the position or the pay to which the best are entitled until the public have the means of differentiating between the good and the bad, between those claiming high pay, and those claiming lower, by some other means than pleasant or painful experience, as the case may be, in times of sickness and distress. . . . After much consideration, I have come to the conclusion that the remedy for the present unsatisfactory state of matters will be found in a comprehensive system of State Registration for Nurses. This, in the interests of the State, of the general public, of all hospitals and private patients, and of the nurses themselves. To formulate such a system will require the help of the very best of those women who have knowledge and experience of nursing matters. It must, as I said, be comprehensive, must not be grown in a mould, but be planted like a tree and allowed to develop in the sunshine of good mental and moral influences. Examination for admission to such register should be *pass* and not competitive, and should be entrusted, to some extent, to nurses of position and experience. Pending registration, every Hospital Certificate should set forth the duration of each branch of training given, so that employers may be able to judge if a nurse has had the experience qualifying her to undertake the care of any special case.

Women who aspire to be nurses of the first rank must, I think, begin earlier than is at present customary to learn their work. There is difference of opinion as to the age at which women should enter the wards of a hospital for training. I think you will all agree that if that age is 24 or 25, a year or two could be most profitably spent in preparatory study. There are many things which can only be learned in the wards of a hospital, but there are others which can equally well be learned outside. I know of two

hospitals—one in Scotland and one in England (there may be others)—where systems of preliminary training and examination have been adopted with the best possible results. The survival of the fittest is ensured, to the immense advantage of patients who are thus delivered from the feckless ministrations of ignorant and incompetent probationers. I would have every candidate for hospital training attend lectures on elementary physiology, anatomy, and hygiene, and courses of practical and demonstrative cookery lessons before she sets foot in a hospital ward. She should also attend lectures on general nursing, learn, amongst other things, how to make and apply poultices and fomentations, to make and apply bandages, to take temperatures, and to make the beds and change the sheets of helpless patients. With such previous knowledge her power to profit by ward training would be increased tenfold. No one need fear that better education would tempt nurses to forget their position and to assume responsibility which belongs to the physician. It is the little knowledge that puffeth up, and the more thoroughly trained a nurse is the more clearly does she recognise where her duty and responsibility end. A good nurse must be something more than a nurse, and ought to be able to think about other things. Women managers must see to it that the nurses' hours are not too long and that the terms of night duty are not unduly protracted. In some hospitals—I am glad to say they are few—the night nurses are kept on duty for a consecutive period of eleven months. For many this is an undue and unnecessary strain.

A suggestion has been made and has been received with favour that this country should have a corps of reserve army nurses numbering one thousand members. Judging from this last year's experience, it is not one too many. It will teach women members of Hospital Boards to co-operate with Hospital Matrons in seeing that their training shall be of the best and that they shall have experience of fever, as well as of ordinary medical and surgical cases.

For all the impression that the magnificent services of Florence Nightingale in the Crimean War have made on the Army Medical Authorities as to what the knowledge and experience of women can accomplish, it might be imagined that they had never even heard of her and of her work. The United States of America have recognised this, and a woman has been, or is to be appointed, under the Chief of the War Office Medical Department, who is to be responsible for all arrangements for the nursing of the soldiers in time of war. With us things work slowly, and the minds of men are not yet accustomed

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