

and other details was carefully prepared by Dr. Bourneville the great pioneer of this reform. Unfortunately the question was made a party one so that professional instruction for hospital nurses became almost synonymous with hostility to the church, and thus estranged from this new career those persons who would have honoured it.

The first school opened comprised two sections, the primary and the professional. In the former class the most diligent pupils were those who hoped to rise to the higher grade by the acquisition of knowledge, and it was touching to see aged nurses of 10 and 20 years' standing sitting on the benches of the school learning to read and write, hoping thus to qualify themselves for the higher posts. The instruction was given in the evening, and the time so spent was taken from the hours of sleep of the nurses, which made their attendance the more praiseworthy. Causes which contributed to want of success in the new schools were:—

1. Religious party spirit was wrongly provoked, so that it was made to appear that educated women who adopted this new career were enrolling themselves in the camp of the enemies of the Church and of God.
2. The courses of instruction were not obligatory.
3. Professional diplomas were awarded to pupils who had not sufficient general knowledge.
4. The defective education of the pupils.

DIPLOMAS.

There is, says Dr. Hamilton, no career in which a woman has greater need of education than in this. Brought constantly into contact with all kinds of strangers, some of the most distinguished class, and others of the lowest, the nurse needs much tact. Required to occupy herself in petty details of life, as well as to take part in its most thrilling phases, she has need of dignity and sangfroid. The many offices required of her can only be well filled by educated persons, and to place uneducated women in such a profession, is to bring upon it discredit for which no diploma can compensate. In order to gain a diploma it is necessary for the pupils to obtain a minimum number of marks in the following subjects: anatomy, dressings, physiology, administration, hygiene, pharmacy, the care of lying-in women and of the newly born, and in a practical examination.

There is, however, no limit to the time in which pupils may present themselves for this test, and it is even on record that one candidate persevered for nine years before passing it. Dr. Hamilton remarks that however creditable this perseverance may be to the individual it does not follow that it is wise to give a diploma to one who has given such proofs of incapacity.

The defects of this diploma are that it is awarded solely as the result of examination and not on the aptitude of the candidate for the nursing career, that is to say, on her general conduct and her devotion to the sick. It is perfectly conceivable that many candidates may be able to pass a brilliant examination while their practical work may be unsatisfactory, or they may be morally unfit for the profession of nursing.

Is it wise, asks Dr. Hamilton, in this profession to award diplomas of aptitude in theory and practice without considering whether the candidate has given proof of conscience, exactness, delicacy, ability and judgment in her relations to the sick. May not the award of a diploma under such conditions put into the hands of the candidate an instrument with which she may effect more harm than good?

The question is without doubt a most difficult one, and candidates should, undoubtedly, be required to produce proofs of practical efficiency and of character, before being entitled to a diploma of nursing, even if their theoretical knowledge stands the test of examination. It must, however, be remembered that the above remarks apply with equal force to the medical profession, and that in its case the enforcement of a minimum standard of knowledge has been of undoubted value.

So long ago as 1878, Dr. Bourneville laid down the axiom that to be obeyed by their subordinates, respected by the sick, and appreciated by the medical profession, nurses should possess good appearance, education, and general knowledge. Contrasting the British and the French systems of nursing, Dr. Hamilton comes to the conclusion that the latter is the more expensive while the former is more efficient.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

We are also told that the personal appearance of the nursing staff of Parisian hospitals affords a painful contrast to the careful and military correct deportment of religious sisters and trained nurses. The wards also, which always reflect more or less the mind of the nursing staff, are so bare and monotonous as to depress those who are not already in this condition. The only ornaments (?) are the bottles of antiseptics on the tables, and the urinals of twenty-four hours' standing, the bottle of medicine, of wine, or the cup of milk side by side or the bracket at the head of the bed. As for flowers, plants, birds, one looks for them in vain.

LACK OF DECENCY.

With regard to nursing details we are told that the nurses are unacquainted with the means by which the condition of a patient under examination may be rendered less painful. That male nurses carry young patients in short nightdresses from one ward to another, and that in the obstetric wards women in labour are totally uncovered and stripped, and the sight of a series of these unhappy patients in the obstetrical position, while conversations and pleasantries, are going on between students and midwives, will explain the horror inspired by the hospital in those not lost to feeling of modesty and morality.

It was decreed in 1832 that women at the "Hotel Dieu" should be stripped for their confinements in order that the pupils might be better instructed. The sick person was thus considered only as a means for instruction, and as having no human rights.

Dr. Hamilton also relates that a head nurse, having called across the ward "Joseph, bring No. 4 for examination," the male nurse brought the patient, placed her in position on the table, and himself assisted at the small gynæcological operation which followed.

Another nurse performing the most private offices for a patient, entirely exposed her before the whole ward. Clerks were passing, the patients walking about, students joking, and the poor young woman, her hand before her eyes, tried to shut out her surroundings.

When such things are possible it is not entirely surprising to learn that the nursing staff do not trouble themselves to protect their young patients from the attentions, more or less correct, of certain students, but that on the contrary they too often accept the same kind of attentions themselves, and appear flattered instead of resenting them as they should, for they are well aware that these galantries do not end in marriage.

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