

examinations. If a nurse is considered inefficient, she would probably be requested to leave; if, on the other hand she shows special aptitude, an effort might be made to retain her services. Beyond this, no one troubles much about them. Anything in the nature of neglect of duty, unkindness to a patient, or objectionable manners would bring down a sharp reprimand from the ward sister if it came under her notice; but as long as the work does not suffer from the nurse's shortcomings no one cares to try to improve her. It is only in relation to her working capabilities that she is regarded, and the effect of the difficult life on her personal character is quite outside anyone's consideration. People have no time to concern themselves about her. Why the Sisters and Doctors do not even seem to see when their nurses are ill, much less care for their general tone of conduct."

#### THE TONE OF MATRONS AND SISTERS.

Further it is asserted "not only is there no one to correct a loss of good tone among the probationers, but the example set them by the Sisters and the Matrons often leaves a good deal to be desired. It seems to be an unwritten law in many hospitals that probationers are to be continually snubbed and lectured by those in authority over them. The object in view almost appears to be to subdue the enthusiasm with which they entered on their work until it reaches vanishing point and to reduce them to mere machines—it is not of just reprimands we are speaking, but of small tyrannies and petty annoyances which are so hard to bear, and which come under the heading of bullying rather than that of discipline. This can hardly be a good school for training the higher susceptibilities of a woman. It is hardly an atmosphere in which she will grow gentler and more womanly than she was before. She is far more likely to become rude and sharp-tongued herself, as bad habits are proverbially infectious."

#### CONCLUSIONS.

In conclusion, it is urged that there is pressing need for reform in the existing methods of training probationers, inasmuch as the public desire better nurses, and that the matter being one of general interest, and hospitals being supported out of funds provided by the public, it is one upon which anyone may demand an enquiry if in any branch of hospital work the results obtained should leave a good deal to be desired.

#### SPEAKING EDITORIALY.

It is all to the good that nursing matters should be discussed by those of the public who have considered them, for it is indisputable that without the help of the public, nurses will never obtain the reforms for which they have long pleaded and worked, and public interest in the affairs of nurses is very difficult to arouse. There is a soupçon of truth in Miss Johnston's charges, but which of us could not paint, with equal truth, a picture the direct opposite of the one she has delineated?

The truth is the public has not yet got at the heart of things, and does not realize that nursing is now in a transition condition. Nor even is the situation understood, for the most part, by the excellent philanthropists who compose the Committees of Hospitals, and who continue to try to fit square pegs into round holes with the inevitable result. The question at issue is whether nursing in the future is to be regarded as a form of domestic service, or whether it is to be a profession for educated and cultured women. In the latter case our nurse training schools must be

organised to meet the requirements of the case, and must rank amongst educational agencies, must, in short, provide a collegiate course.

This is where the shoe pinches. Everyday, to meet increasing requirements, the cost to hospitals, maintained out of funds supplied by the charitable public, becomes heavier. Is it to be expected, is it justifiable, that hospital managers shall spend thousands of pounds annually in maintaining Nursing Colleges where women can obtain a scientific training and education to fit them for professional work? The pupils must pay in part the cost of their own education, and Nursing Colleges and Schools in the future, as Medical Schools in the past, will need the financial support of wealthy persons interested in education if they are to be maintained on an efficient basis; but to support them out of funds subscribed for the relief of the sick poor is, in our opinion, unjustifiable.

Then the hospital Matron to whom Miss Johnston takes exception will cease to be the overseer of domestic labour, and will evolve into the Principal of the Nurse Training School. Nothing struck us more forcibly on our recent visit to the United States than the facility with which American women have adapted themselves to these new conditions.

In this country, while demanding a high standard of practical nursing, hospital Matrons, with very few exceptions, have done little to encourage or develop the professional spirit in their pupils. While the Society of Superintendents in America has done all in its power to encourage nurses to co-operate for professional purposes, in this country they are discouraged, and in some instances even forbidden to associate, themselves with their colleagues of other schools, though the efforts of the Matrons' Council towards a more liberal and broader ideal have not been fruitless.

Those who consider that the training schools should be isolated, and that the nurses of each should be permanently attached to their respective private nursing, staffs have not grasped either the inadvisability of always keeping graduate nurses in leading strings or realised that what is needed is the regulation of the profession as a whole. The profession is judged not by nurses in hospitals, but by the large number who go out from them to earn their living and who, if they fail in a high sense of duty, if they are narrow, intolerant, lacking in self respect and professional camaraderie depreciate the whole profession in the estimation of the public.

Thus we arrive at the truth that to get the best out of the nurse we must get the best out of the woman. No amount of professional skill will make up for the lack of essential personal qualities. Perhaps we needed a reminder that so far little ethical instruction, has been given in our training schools. If so, let us lay the lesson to heart.

#### THE NEED OF AN ENQUIRY.

Miss Johnston puts her finger on the first essential in any movement towards nursing reform when she speaks of the need for an enquiry. The NURSING RECORD has pleaded, thoughtful nurses have pleaded, for a Parliamentary enquiry into the whole nursing question. So far it has not been granted. If Miss Johnston will urge the need of such an enquiry upon members of Parliament, she will be doing good service to the Nursing Profession. Such an enquiry is an essential preliminary to legislation, and the need for legislation is rapidly becoming urgent.

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