

completely satisfying even the most exacting of Registration Boards.

I will endeavour to explain what I mean from my own experience.

I speak for myself and I am sure for many of my co-Matrons when I say that I receive very many more applications during the year than I have vacancies for, and so am able to choose carefully-educated and refined women as probationers. It has been suggested that the surgical work is inadequate. On making inquiries I find that there are in many of our metropolitan infirmaries most excellently-appointed operating theatres, in which major operations and very constantly-occurring minor ones are carried out with just the same care as to antiseptics as in our large hospitals. It must be remembered that there are no medical students, so all the dressings usually done by them fall to the nurses' share. The very fact that in some institutions where there are as yet no operating theatres, for each operation the Ward Sisters and nurses have to carbolicise and prepare whatever room is most convenient and available, and sterilise and get ready everything that may be wanted, involves a better preparation for private nursing than where everything is to hand in a modern, fully-equipped theatre.

As in all branches of the profession, nurses vary, and, given the same opportunities, make such very different use of them, it may be necessary for the nurse in many cases to take up some special surgical work to supplement her training. (The necessity for fever and other special experience will be dealt with in a paper later on.) In our infirmaries we take probationers at the age of twenty-one, so they would still after their three years' training have time for special work, and yet not be centenarians before standing for the Registration examination.

I should mention that in many of our infirmaries the nurses receive instruction in the lying-in wards during their three years' training, and it is hoped by degrees to offer them more facilities to qualify in this most necessary branch of their profession.

As to the training in medical nursing, there is no doubt that this can be most thoroughly learnt in all its details in the wards of our large workhouse infirmaries. Our patients are of the poorest, so our pneumonias and other acute cases are often complicated by want and starvation, or else with the result of heavy drinking, which adds to the difficulty of nursing them.

Besides the more or less acute cases which are continually coming and going, there is always a residuum of the old and the bed-ridden. From the medical and surgical point of view their cases present little interest or excitement. There is no crisis to watch for, no cheerful hope, often no gratitude, only a strong sense of duty to be done,

of work well carried out each day. For the nurse there is valuable experience in the matter of moving and lifting helpless patients and preventing bed-sores, but this work is a special feature in Poor Law nursing quite invaluable in the training of character. There are unique opportunities of learning all that goes to make an ideal woman; the quiet, conscientious sense of duty that will lead the nurse to take as much care of a paralysed, bed-ridden patient as of an exciting operation case, the untiring patience and the unfailing good temper with the fretful and querulous—these are invaluable qualities for a trained nurse to possess.

There will be many difficulties in fixing the lines on which the examination is to be held; but, *solvitur ambulando*, by degrees schemes will be formulated. But I would urge that—after it has been fixed on broad principles what training shall be recognised by the Board—all candidates should enter on an equal footing, every nurse going in on her own merits and submitting to the old test of the "survival of the fittest."

As in the late war the good and bad of our army system and auxiliary forces were tested, and much that was good was brought to light, so I think that when State Registration is inaugurated, and the present chaotic state of the nursing profession is at an end, the trained and disciplined nurses of our metropolitan infirmaries, who have as yet hardly been recognised and appreciated as they ought to be, will form a large and valuable addition to the nurses of Great Britain recognised by the State, and will form a real boon and a blessing to those of the public who are fortunate enough to secure their services in their time of sickness and trial.

Society for State Registration of Nurses.

We have to acknowledge a donation of one guinea sent with a sympathetic letter from Mr. Frederick Gant, F.R.C.S., towards the funds of the above Society.

Well-trained nurses in Cairo are very keen for Registration. Small wonder when one learns that during the past winter, women with eight months' training have been getting £5 5s. a week for their services.

Application forms and all information in reference to the Society for State Registration of Trained Nurses can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, London, W. Annual subscription, 1s. Life membership, so long as the Society exists for its present object, 5s. Please enclose stamped envelope for reply.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)