

What is therefore needed is the establishment of a minimum standard of education, to which all pupils must attain before being allowed to describe themselves as trained nurses, or to undertake professional work as such, and, further, that training-schools must show to a recognised authority that they are able to provide the necessary experience and instruction before being allowed to rank in this capacity. But while the hospitals have for long claimed to be something more than mere hospices for the reception of the sick, there is a very strong disinclination on the part of many hospital managers to rate nurses as anything but domestic workers, to provide facilities for their professional education, and to evolve an efficient curriculum.

The cause of this disinclination is, no doubt, ignorance on the part of the majority of hospital managers of the requirements of this special branch of their work. They are, as a rule, men of business, and philanthropists; competent financiers, but unversed in educational methods and requirements. Further, the exclusion of women, with few exceptions, from hospital boards eliminates the domestic element which is so great a factor in the efficient nursing of the sick.

Those who advocate the organisation of nursing as a profession for cultured women see in the trained nurse the most important instrument in the hands of the medical practitioner, and hold that, to produce the best, the woman who enters the training-school should possess high mental, moral, and physical qualifications; that, on the other hand, it is the duty of the training-school to provide its pupils with a thorough education in nursing, which, to be efficient, must comprise a knowledge of the scientific principles on which such education is founded; that the better educated the pupil, the more likely she is to do credit to the profession which she enters, and, therefore, they claim that to attract a high type of woman the term "trained nurse" should have a definite value, and that the names of those who are entitled to use it should be placed on a Register authorised by the State.

Many misconceptions have, in the past, obscured the real issues which are involved in the demand of trained nurses for legal registration. It is well, therefore, at the outset to make it plain that the movement is primarily an educational one; although it undoubtedly has other aspects.

THE EDUCATIONAL ASPECT.

Nursing, in the modern acceptance of the term, has been evolved by the immense advances made by medicine and surgery during the last half-century, and it has grown in importance and usefulness coincidentally with the development of those sciences. It has, therefore, become necessary that the modern nurse must be educated on lines which are capable of developing her powers of scientific accuracy in observation and report, as well as her technical

skill and her personal responsibility and conscientiousness in the fulfilment of her duties.

The necessity for skilled assistance in the execution of modern medical and surgical methods of treatment has caused the great and ever-growing demand for women specially educated to undertake and carry out efficiently such responsible work. But here we are at once confronted with the fact that the term "Trained Nurse" has at present no definite meaning, seeing that there is no minimum standard to which such nurses are required to attain, and no uniformity whatever either in the length or the methods or the subjects of nursing education. So that, as a matter of fact, any woman can to-day describe herself, and can pretend to act, as a trained nurse.

Those who desire that a more uniform and complete system of education for nurses should be adopted are often accused of advocating instruction which is merely theoretical; but the advocates of nursing reform realise keenly not only that efficiency demands the production of the best practical workers, but also that these cannot be obtained unless they possess a sound foundation of theoretical knowledge; and, moreover, wide experience has proved not only that practical ability must be based on such theoretical knowledge, but also that the latter should be acquired before the nursing pupil begins her practical or clinical training. It is believed by those who have carefully considered the question that nursing education in the future can only be properly systematised by obtaining an Act of Parliament which would provide for the formation of a Central Nursing Council, representative of all the interests involved, which would define and enforce a minimum and uniform curriculum of nursing education, which would appoint examiners and confer a recognised qualification in nursing upon those who attain to the required standard of knowledge and efficiency, which would maintain a public Register of the nurses so qualified, and would possess the power to remove from that Register the name of any nurse who proved herself unworthy of professional trust, thus maintaining the professional discipline which is every year becoming more essential.

When nursing education is controlled by a Central Nursing Council, it appears probable that its course would fall into three main divisions. For example, there would be preliminary training-schools where the theoretical principles underlying the practice of nursing would be taught; such, for instance, as elementary anatomy, physiology and bacteriology, personal and domestic hygiene, domestic science, dietetics, invalid cookery, the preparation of practical appliances required for the treatment of the sick, the practice of bandaging, and the best aseptic methods of preparing instruments and dressings.

Having passed her examinations and obtained a certificate from a preliminary school, a nursing

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