

tended instruction into the schools of our own country was urged, and it was also urged that the education of nurses generally be brought into some sort of conformity with education for other professions. At the date of the publication of this paper a preparatory course of instruction had just been established in one of our American schools, and a class of sixteen pupils were entering for a six-months' course of instruction in the principles of their work before taking up its practice in the hospital wards. It is interesting to be able now to state that within a bare four years we can point to such preparatory courses of study established in one form or another in twenty-four schools as a part of their regular system of training; we find eleven schools either sending their probationers to technical institutes for instruction in many of these preliminary subjects, or giving preference to candidates who have taken a prescribed course in such a technical school; and we have assurances from other training-schools that such a preparatory course is under consideration and likely to become an actual fact within a short period. It is further interesting to note that this reconstruction of methods of teaching has taken place in schools which are not only representative, but are, and have been, distinguished by a liberal and progressive spirit.

It is safe to say that no one measure of improvement or reform in the education of nurses has aroused a more general interest in the training-schools of this country than the establishment of such preparatory instruction for nurses, and it is probably safe to add that with one exception no other measure has received a more immediate recognition of its importance or has been more rapidly adopted into our training-schools. We have been making history fast during the past ten years. Along with a startlingly rapid growth of schools have come many changes of a really radical nature. The two years of work and study have given place to three, the payment of money to pupils has been quite abolished in some schools for a number of years, and has dwindled almost to the vanishing-point in a good many others. Paid instructors are quite a common feature of the best schools, hours of duty are almost universally shortened, and practice and theory to some extent regulated. Scholarships have been awarded in certain schools for some years, and tuition fees are in several a requirement; but, with the exception of the lengthened course of study, no one of these measures has so quickly commended itself, not only to training-school and hospital authorities, but to the laity as well, as the establishment of preparatory instruction for nurses.

In view of this somewhat surprising and quite gratifying fact, it has seemed advisable this year to look into the matter a little and see what is going on in this new development of training-school work. I call it surprising, because under the easiest and

most favourable circumstances the introduction of such a course of study is fraught with many difficulties; and gratifying, in that it reveals a wide appreciation of the need which has long existed for more rational methods of education for our nurses, and shows a readiness, if not a desire, on the part of training-school workers to get out of the old, comfortable path of least resistance, and to readjust ourselves to changed or changing conditions.

In looking over the reports and statistics which have recently been obtained from the various schools where preparatory instruction has some place in the plan of work, one's first thought is that even within this comparatively limited field the methods as outlined are distinguished as much by diversity as by uniformity. The former attribute shows itself first in a very marked way in the period of time set apart to be devoted to this course of study. In several schools, six in all, a full six months is required for this preparation. In a good many others four months suffices, while three months is a very popular period, and that which has so far been chosen by the majority of schools. Some others have presumably resorted to the "thin edge of the wedge" and are accomplishing in this direction as much as it is possible to accomplish in a few weeks. In all but one or two instances this term, of whatever length it may be, is included in the three years. In a very great number of instances lengthening of the course has been one of the ways suggested for its improvement and development, and a full year is considered by some not too long a period in which to give this preparation satisfactorily. Recognition of the need of this instruction has been met in an interesting way. (After a regular, definite course of work and study absolutely preparatory to the training of nurses in hospital wards was first established in one of our representative schools of nursing, the opening up of similar courses of study in other schools soon followed, and with them came a good deal of discussion as to where this preparatory teaching could best be carried on.) It was evidently a much needed improvement in methods, but it seemed to make demands upon the resources of most hospitals rather beyond their power to meet. The idea that a good deal of the desired instruction might be found in the regular courses offered at certain technical schools was advanced, resulting in the announcement at about the same time, September, 1903, of such preparatory courses of instruction in two of our great technical schools, the Drexel Institute, at Philadelphia, and the Pratt, at Brooklyn. Soon after a similar course was offered at the Toronto Technical School, and a little later at Simmons College, Boston. In Topeka, Kan., a brief course of somewhat the same nature is given at the Kansas State Agricultural College, to which we are told the nurses of Christ's Hospital Training-School are sent, their expenses paid by the hospital. The work has

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