

rhubarb was cooked without sugar! We got our sugar back by stratagem, but I can never forget that sugarless month!

Our theoretical training was rather limited, we had three courses of lectures of 10 lectures each. On the nursing of medical and surgical cases, and on chemistry. The term of training was one year, but for some reason I was placed in charge of a ward after nine months, a position I took with the confidence and courage of profound ignorance. However, I had not been long a Sister before I found that nine months' practical work and so little theory was hardly sufficient to fit one for so responsible a post. It was two years before I had my work fully in hand, and I easily concluded that three years was the proper length of training for a nurse. I have never had occasion to alter this; longer time I think is good, but no less than three years in the wards will do. I was Sister of Alexandra Ward for five years, and enjoyed every day of it. The work of a Sister is such human work. One learns that "the Colonel's wife and Judy O'Grady are sisters under the skin." I could tell you many tales of those patients full of acutely human interest.

In 1885 I left St. Thomas's Hospital, when I was appointed Matron of a small-pox camp at Darenth in Kent. It was under the Metropolitan Asylums Board, and Sir Edmund Hay Currie was Chairman. His dictionary did not contain the word impossible! and he helped me to erase it from mine! for which I have every reason to thank him. I know no better school for Matrons than the Asylum Board Hospitals. I was two years in them, one year at Darenth, and one at Homerton, and they taught me much that has been of enormous use to me since.

The ball of progress which Miss Nightingale set rolling in 1854 has gathered size and importance which is almost miraculous. Year by year hospitals are turning out well trained disciplined women who are fit to take a foremost place in the working of the world. I think I may say that hospitals are still the impregnable castles of discipline. In these days of easy-goingness they are valuable assets in the training of the young. Many new lines of work are opening out to nurses, not only in the care of the sick, but as agents in the prevention of disease. I notice particularly the work done by them in schools, and I look forward to the time when the most important branch will develop, and we shall have cleanliness and health taught in all our schools.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick has spoken to you of the past strenuous years in which we have

striven for the legal recognition of our profession in the State Registration of Nurses. It is not yet an accomplished fact, but the opposition we have contended with has given way to a great extent, and the support we get is becoming stronger every day.

Twenty years ago seven Matrons met at Mrs. Bedford Fenwick's invitation to hear her suggestions, and the result was the British Nurses' Association. Of its lamentable history I will say nothing, but it was when, in consequence of disagreement, we had to leave, that the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland was formed to carry on the work which had fallen from the hands of the older association. Of this Society I have been President from the first. It is a quiet little body of women, which has done much good work, giving birth to other societies such as The Society for the State Registration of Nurses, The National Council of Nurses, and the International Council. It is not much heard of by the rank and file of nurses, and not till the third volume of the History of Nursing comes to be written will the nurses know how much the Matrons' Council has done by organisation for the protection of the profession, the safeguarding of its rights, and for the establishment of State Registration.

In looking back over these twenty-one years at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, I see so many changes. In 1887 there were two nurses in the Out-patients' Department, two colossal women known as the "Angel" and the "Fairy"! In our new Out-patient Department there are 22 nurses under one inimitable Sister. The one general theatre then in existence was looked after by the two Sisters of Lucas and Abernethy Wards. There are now three general theatres and in them ten nurses working under a Sister do not find it an idle life! Nurses in those far-off days worked for eleven hours and forty minutes, taking an average of a month. These hours amount now on the average to under nine. There was only one night nurse to each of the double wards, now there are two, and they have two nights off duty every month. When I came to Bart's there were still a few of the old class of Sister left, some of them clever women, if not too well educated. Sister Faith will be still remembered by many. I remember one excellent story about her. She was carving a pie at the Sisters' dinner, which took place at the curious hour of five in those days; looking up from her task she said, "Fellow Sisters, this pie is as 'ard as the 'art of Pharaoh!" She was for some time in a ward for men, and one of her patients admired her so much that

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