

vision of the requisite technical instruction. It was felt that the efficiency of the Nurse was to be gauged first by the possession of these qualities without which the professional knowledge and acquirements were comparatively useless for all practical purposes. The conduct and the behaviour, as well as the practical skill of the Nurse, were, as shown in her daily work in the Wards, to be continuously observed and reported on, so that means should be afforded of effectively correcting deficiencies, and testing progress in both. The final estimate of the Nurse's qualifications was held to depend in a large measure on the possession, in greater or less degree, of these moral qualities, which are not ascertainable by examinations, nor measurable by marks.

The nature of the Nurse's duties, and the training and qualifications required for fulfilling those duties, render the case of Nurses, in this respect, very different from that of Medical Students.

To refer now to the machinery of the Register.

It is not enough to say that the moral character of the Nurse can be ascertained by a certificate of good conduct from the Training School previous to admission upon the Register; for, in the first place, who is to certify the Training School? and, in the next place, how is the evidence of the character to be kept up in subsequent years after the name has been placed on the Register?

Training Schools vary greatly in their character. The Institution may be said to be, as regards by far the greater number of them, of comparatively recent date. Their methods are different, their standards of requirements are unequal, and, although very considerable progress has been made, yet very much still requires to be done. It would be useless to attempt to force the growth of these Institutions towards more advanced views by any legislative measures. Moreover, it cannot, I venture to think, yet be said that those who have the direction of Hospitals and Training Schools, whether laymen or professional men, have arrived at such a general concurrence of opinion as to the system to be pursued in the School and Hospital, or in the standard of qualification to be required of a Nurse, as will render it practicable or expedient to lay down any general conditions to which Training Schools should conform, in order that their pupils may be entitled to admission on a General Register.

Then comes the further difficulty as to keeping up the value of the Registration.

- Nurses are not exceptional in being subject to great deterioration if not kept up to the mark by pressure from outside, and the character of their work renders them more subject to temptations and vicissitudes tending to deterioration, than others.

In every-day life, those who know what they are about, require, before engaging a Nurse, recent evidence, and evidence which must be of a confidential kind, as to moral qualities and the nature and degree of these qualities. Is it possible that the machinery of a legal Register can be made capable of obtaining and affording such information? The nature of the evidence required, and the legal character of the Register, appears to preclude any such result.

But it is said that the public does not take its Doctors from the Register, nor will it take its Nurses; that the Register is only required as a safeguard, a preventative against untrained Nurses being employed by a necessarily ignorant public, that the public and Medical Men will thus gain great benefits, and may still continue to require further evidence of a private character.

To this it may be safely answered that there cannot be a doubt that the great mass of the public, as well as of Medical Men, will be content to take their Nurses from the Register and the Register only; and even assuming that it may be of value at first, the effect will be that, in the course of no long time after its establishment, the Register will become a very untrustworthy guide.

Now I come to this further consideration. It is the opinion of many of those who have had the longest and widest experience as Matrons of Hospitals and heads of Training Schools, that the effect of a General Register upon the standard of training will have the very reverse effect to that contemplated by its supporters, namely, to lower instead of raising the standard. This result must be a necessary consequence if my previous contention be correct, that the real character of the Nurse will not find a place on the Register, for if the Register is merely based upon the possession of technical knowledge accompanied by a colourless Certificate of good conduct, the value of those moral qualities to which so much importance attaches as a test of efficiency will be entirely lost.

In the next place, it is obvious that the conditions for admission on the Register must be so framed as to conform to the capabilities of the average Nurse and to meet the requirements of the average Training School. Great injustice would be done to a number of respectable women were a higher standard insisted on, and seeing that the official recognition of the Register would be considered sufficient by the great mass of employers, the result would be that the same advantages would be thereby conferred on the inferior as on the superior Nurse. It would also thus tend to destroy any ambition on the part of the bulk of Nurses to obtain the higher Certificate which might be afforded by a superior over an

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