

The Post Office report for last year, for example, shows that it only has 857 people altogether who are paying for these annuities, and that during 1887 only 87 persons became subscribers to the department, and on an average these only desired an annuity of £20 a year each.

It is not only ridiculous, but in our opinion wrong, to endeavour to persuade nurses that the Pension Fund rates are not abnormally high by quoting such misleading figures without due explanation, as those of the Post Office Annuity Department. We hope, therefore, for the credit of our contemporary, that Diogenes will hasten back into the calm seclusion of his tub, and solace himself therein with the contemplation of his superiority to logic, facts, and grammar, as reflected in his own particular mirror.

THE REGISTRATION OF TRAINED NURSES.

WE have been asked so many times for information respecting the circular issued by the Hospitals Association bearing upon the above, that for the general information of our readers we print it *in extenso*, together with the report of "The Joint Sectional Committee of Registration"—whatever this long and high-sounding title may mean—upon it.

The joint committee of the Hospitals Association appointed to consider the question of a system of registration for qualified nurses, begs to submit to the Council the following report:—

Your committee considered that the first step towards a right knowledge of the subject was to make a formal inquiry into the practice and wishes of the various nurse-training schools in London and throughout the country, with the view of eliciting whether they were desirous of establishing a collective register; and, if so, to state the length of the curriculum, the syllabus of education, and the character of the certificate which they deemed necessary to qualify a nurse before her name should be entered on the proposed register. To obtain the fullest information on these and other incidental points connected with nurse-training, the committee put itself in communication with thirty-four establishments in England and Scotland, which profess to educate nurses. Of this number, twenty-four were associated with medical schools, seven were ordinary medical and surgical hospitals, and three were union infirmaries. Eight of the hospitals communicated with have taken no notice of the application; one curtly refused to have any thing to do with it; six acknowledged receipt, with a promise that the document should receive consideration; nineteen, comprising seventeen large hospitals and two union infirmaries, have contributed more or less information. The questions were addressed through the secretaries to the chairman of the House or Nursing Committees of the respective hospitals; and it may be fairly assumed, since some of the questions relate to matters outside domestic management, that difficulties and delays in answering them have arisen, from the desire, on the part of the committees, to consult the superintendents of nurses and the medical authorities of the hospitals on the subject. Some of the answers are simply the

individual opinions of the matrons, or of medical superintendents, or of some prominent member of the medical staff of the hospital; and may, or not, be those of the committees of management who, as a rule, are unwilling to pledge themselves to any special course of action. The doubtful character of many of the replies to the questions, and the entire absence of any reply at all to others, indicate considerable divergence of opinion among the authorities consulted, and all tend materially to increase the difficulties surrounding the subject.

Question I. Do you consider a general system of registration desirable for qualified nurses? may be viewed as a key to the whole series, for it would naturally follow that in the case of a direct negative there would be no occasion to enter any reply to the others. Rather less than one-half of the replies are in the affirmative, while the bare majority, comprising, however, the leading and best known training-schools, desire to be let alone. The grounds of the latter for this opinion are based on the facts that each has established a register of its own to meet its special requirements; that they would lose rather than gain by any system partaking of amalgamation, and that the time has not arrived for a central organization to be delegated with authority to control the action of the various bodies, commercial and charitable, entrusted with the management of nurses. There is every reason to believe that the following training-schools concur in these opinions, the Nightingale Fund Committee associated with St. Thomas's Hospital and other institutions, the London Hospital, Guy's Hospital, St. George's Hospital, Westminster Hospital, King's College Hospital, together with the Royal Infirmaries of Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Edinburgh. It is highly probable also that many of the hospitals which have not yet answered the questions addressed to them, have refrained from doing so from an unwillingness to entertain suggestions which would interfere with their local organization.

Questions II. and III. have reference to the central agency through which registration ought to be organised, should the answer to Question I. be in the affirmative. Five of the institutions declare for the General Medical Council for Education and Registration, four for a separate organization associated with the training-schools, and two with the Hospitals Association. Failing the Medical Council undertaking the duty, two of the above would prefer the Hospitals Association, two a separate organization, and one the British Nurses Association if it was properly constituted.

Question IV. refers to the length of the curriculum considered desirable for a nurse to undergo prior to her having her certificate, or her name entered on the proposed register. Here opinions vary very much. Nine think that a nurse should serve three years before being certified, four consider two years sufficient, three suggest that each should serve one year's probation and one year as nurse, and one only would limit the time to one year.

Questions V. and VI. relate to the instruction given to the nurse-pupils during their term of probation. Oral instruction by means of lectures and demonstrations appears to be carried out in all the institutions which have responded, with the exception of two, and considerable stress in two instances is laid on the expediency of the tuition being followed up by practical demonstrations from a female instructor. The nurse's knowledge on the subject of lectures is tested in about one-half of the replies to this question; but the remark is appended in more than one case, that it frequently happens that those who distinguish themselves most by answering questions turn out to be the least efficient nurses. With regard to the amount of instruction, opinions vary, but the majority consider that lectures on medical or surgical subjects should be given

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