

this column, at some early date, almost universally adopted by the chief training schools, not only in this country, or even in the British Empire, but also throughout the world. And it may, therefore, be accepted as certain that this standard will be the *minimum* required from candidates for registration in future. It, therefore, becomes important for all who desire efficient training, that they should only enter at those Institutions which conform to this standard. And from this arises the matter to which we desire to call attention.

There are, we regret to learn, certain Institutions in this country which appear to pursue a practice which only requires to be stated in order to be generally condemned. Some of them state that they train Nurses for three years, some of them for two years, but they unite in asserting upon the certificate of training which they give to their pupils that the whole of the specified period has been spent by the Probationer "in the wards of the Hospital." During the past month we have seen two Nurses whose certificates—in the one instance, from an important west country Hospital, and, in the other, from a Metropolitan Institution of the largest size—state that the Nurse has been trained in the wards, in the first case, for three years, and, in the second, for two years. Both these statements, signed in each case by the Chairman of the Committee, the Matron of the Hospital, and members of the medical staff, are false and most misleading. In the first instance, the Nurse for more than one year out of the three had been employed as a private Nurse, and was, therefore, by so much time short of the training which her certificate stated that she had gained in the wards of her Hospital. In the second, the Nurse had for eleven months out of the two years been employed in a similar capacity. Both these certificates, therefore, are, on their face, calculated to deceive the public and medical men on an essential point, and, therefore, are not only disgraceful to those whose signatures are appended to them, but most detrimental to the Institutions upon whose good name such deliberate deception of the public, when discovered, is naturally calculated to have a most harmful effect. It is, moreover, needless to observe that if the public realise that they can place no reliance upon the truthfulness of assertions made in the certificates issued by one Hospital, they will naturally discredit testimonials issued by other Institutions, with most injurious results to the whole Nursing profession. As we shall show, next week, the effect upon individual Nurses trained under such conditions is still more unjust and still more detrimental. For the present, we would most earnestly deprecate the system to which we allude, and, for their own sakes, would ask the Hospital authorities who sign Nurses' certificates to ascertain for themselves, before they do so, that the statements to which they accord the sanction of their signatures, are perfectly true and straightforward.

THE STRAIN OF NURSING.

A medical contemporary recently questioned whether, if Nurses required as long a holiday and as complete intermissions from their work, as Hospital Matrons averred, there must not be something radically wrong in the system which rendered such an amount of rest essential. If our contemporary had been aware of the strain to which Nurses at the present day are subjected, of the long hours which they are compelled to work, of the multiplicity of duties which they have to carry out, and, in the case of Probationers, of the calls which are made upon their spare time for educational requirements, the question to which we allude would probably not have been asked. But there is one point to which, in this connection, attention may well be drawn, because it is one which may easily be overlooked. The demands which are made upon trained Nurses in the way, not only of careful attention upon the patient, but of accuracy and watchfulness in noticing the progress of symptoms, have a result upon the nervous system, which it is difficult completely to estimate, but which is the greater the more conscientious a Nurse is. We have upon previous occasions, in this column, referred to the painful frequency with which, during the last few months, Nurses have committed suicide, and, unhappily, there is reason to believe that the number of these women who break down in health from the strain of their work is considerably on the increase. This is especially true with regard to those who have been inefficiently or insufficiently trained, and who find themselves, therefore, unable properly to perform their duties when entrusted with the care of private patients, or with grave responsibilities in Hospital wards. As we attain to a more complete and better regulated system of education for Nurses, especially to a more satisfactory arrangement of work and rest, we believe that the evil results of over pressure will diminish and disappear; because it must be admitted that twelve hours work a day for seven days a week and for fifty weeks in the year, with heavy manual labour, combined with a novel mental strain, and all this performed under conditions totally different from those amongst which the worker has passed her previous life, and amidst surroundings conducive to ill-health and depression rather than the opposite conditions, must of necessity be detrimental rather than advantageous to the mental and bodily health of anyone. And if it be granted that the conditions of such labour are harmful, it should be by no means difficult to so alter them as to prevent their mischievous results.

NURSES' SHOES.

This is a subject to which Nurses devote, as a rule, far too little thought. The essential requisites in these articles are that they should support the feet, and, so far as indoor work is concerned, that they should be silent. They should therefore, be made of ordinary leather, the heels should be broad and comparatively low and tipped with rubber. Patent leather is as inappropriate as are those cloth shoes, which so many Nurses affect, for the specious but deceptive comfort which they appear to give. But while the former heat the feet too much, the latter permit the muscles to become strained and the arch to fall, the whole foot, therefore, spreading out, and, sooner or later, becoming "flat," with consequent pain and gradually increasing lameness.

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