

are, for the public good, and for the benefit of their profession, Registered and controlled. Events are rapidly moving in that direction. Immense advances have been made towards this end during the last seven years, and everything seems to show that the State Registration of Nurses will soon become an accomplished fact.

#### NURSING QUALITIES.

The old idea that a Nurse, like a poet, was born, not made, has in the present day become quite exploded, and it is now recognised, not only that a very careful education in technical subjects must be received by a woman desiring to become an efficient attendant upon the sick, but also that, in order that she may both learn and practice her calling to the best advantage of the sick, she must be possessed of certain necessary qualities. First, and perhaps most important, she must be absolutely HEALTHY and STRONG, because the work involved in modern training is so arduous and so responsible that, unless she starts with these initial advantages, she is almost certain to break down and be unable to complete her education. Moreover, when she is trained, it is above all things essential for the sick that their attendant should possess a healthy mind in a healthy body. Otherwise she will be unable to properly discharge her duties, to lift or efficiently attend upon her patients, or to bear the oftentimes prolonged strain of watching by the sick bed. Next to this physical ability, it is essential that she should be possessed of GOOD TEMPER—and it is remarkable how this depends upon her own condition of health—and of the indefinable quality known as TACT. Nothing conduces, on the one hand, so much to the comfort and well-being of the sick, as the ability on the part of their attendant to cheer and sympathise with them. Nothing, on the other hand, is so detrimental, as the exhibition either of *gaucherie* or of apparent lack of feeling. Indeed, in difficult or dangerous cases, it means oftentimes the success or failure of an operation, the recovery or the death of the patient, having a Nurse who will gain the patient's confidence and improve his or her mental condition. Next among the Nursing qualities comes CLEANLINESS, because this is the basis of good surgical Nursing, and in medical work it is also essential both for the prevention of the spread of infectious diseases, and for the speedy restoration of the patient. In fact, by many, cleanliness is held to be the supreme Nursing quality, and its necessity cannot be too greatly emphasised. Then comes CONSCIENTIOUSNESS—the excessive carefulness over details, the over-powering desire to omit nothing which would be for the patient's comfort or welfare, the scrupulous performance of all the directions given by the medical attendant. Although one might easily exhaust the category of estimable

qualities, and say that one and all were necessary for a Nurse—as indeed they are—it is, next, necessary that she should be absolutely TRUTHFUL. It will be her duty to report, for example, the progress of a patient to the doctor between his visits, and any error in fact, or any omission in the narration of important symptoms might, and probably would, influence the treatment which he adopted, and would, therefore, be detrimental to the patient. The Nurse, therefore, must not only learn to observe carefully, because one important part of her training will consist in the education of her faculty of observation, but she must be rigorously exact in her statement of facts. And here it will not be out of place to note the wisdom of invariably committing all observations to writing at the moment, because nothing is more deceptive than memory, and the necessity of exactitude is in nothing more important than in the description of the progress of disease.

#### NURSING EDUCATION.

Presuming then that a woman possesses the qualities which have been set forth, and furthermore that she feels an earnest desire to devote herself to the care of the sick, as a life work; and is prepared with single-hearted unselfishness to endure the many drawbacks of the calling, the first question which will arise is—how is she to receive the technical training necessary for her work? Writing, as we do, at a time of extreme transition in the Nursing world, we can only note to-day that immense differences exist in the methods adopted at various Institutions throughout the British Empire, in the methods of Nursing education; and this chiefly arises from the fact that no definite standard of training has yet been universally adopted in any branch of the educational curriculum. At present, some Hospitals train Nurses for four years, the great majority of the leading Institutions hold to the three years' term, a few keep to the old fashioned two years' system, and some even maintain the altogether obsolete opinion that a Nurse can be properly educated to perform the duties which will devolve upon her, within the limited space of twelve calendar months. There can be no doubt, however, that within a very brief space of time there will be a universal standard of three years' training, to which all Institutions desiring to be regarded as Nurse Training Schools will conform. But considering the position which has always been assumed by this Journal in Nursing progress and reform, and considering also the transitional and inchoate condition of Nursing education at the present moment, it will perhaps be better that we should attempt to define what we believe will within the next few years be recognised as the necessary educational curriculum for a Nurse. In the first place then, it appears to us that those

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)