

led to the consideration of a long projected scheme, viz., the taking of a special course of instruction, including Elementary Anatomy, Physiology, and Hygiene, followed by a course of clinical instruction, before being admitted into the wards for the learning of the practical part of a Nurse's work—a subject first mentioned by Dr. William Macewen (now Professor of Surgery in the University of Glasgow), on the occasion of his address to our Nursing Staff on the morning of the 1st of January, 1891, in the following words:—

“Cannot Nursing be raised to a distinct profession, with its entrance examination, its minimum requirements, theoretical and practical, its teachers, its examiners, and its diplomas? Cannot St. Mungo's College, with its omnivorous capacity, found a Faculty of Nursing? The whole machinery and material is at hand, the students are assembled, and are anxious and eager to begin.

A Nurse ought to have a good preliminary education, the more liberal the better. She ought then to acquire a fair knowledge of anatomy, physiology, bacteriology, hygiene, cuisine, and an outline of the principles of therapeutics, medicine, and surgery, sufficient to enable her to follow with intelligence the movements of disease, and the treatment she is entrusted to carry out. Then clinical instruction should also form a very important part. Will the Royal Infirmary lead in this direction, or will it wait till others take the field?”

On my return to office as Matron of the Royal Infirmary in November of the same year, this matter was, shortly after, by the aid of our Medical Staff, placed before our managers, and received by them with the most hearty sympathy. After due consideration a scheme was elaborated, which we were requested to put into operation in January, 1893.

As far as we can judge it appears to be a success.

A scheme will shortly be brought forward whereby we hope to provide accommodation for our student Nurses at a cost of 10s. per week for board and lodging. *This*, with the fees for the classes, will bring the total cost of the three months' preliminary instruction to about £12, which can scarcely be looked upon as excessive. There has been the most marked improvement in the health of our Nurses since the introduction of this system of giving class instruction *apart* from ward work, which can only be accounted for by the absence of all study during the time the Probationer is engaged in the active work of the wards—it being strain enough without the addition of book learning—and by the greater attention paid to the food. Our cooking department is now presided over by a lady who holds a diploma for cooking—an arrangement I would strongly recommend to all similar institutions.

One Probationer only (since January, 1893) has failed to carry through her training owing to the condition of her health. We have now proved that the work is not detrimental to the young, some of our pupils having barely attained their 20th year at the time of entering into the wards for the practical part of their training. We have not found previous residence in Hospital of any advantage to those who enter for the theoretical course of instruction; on the contrary, those of our Nurses who have been relieved from duty for the purpose of attending the lectures are of opinion that the pupils coming more recently from school work are in a better form for study, and can, therefore, derive more benefit from the instruction given than they themselves can.

In inaugurating a work of this kind of course there are initiatory difficulties, but these we found by no means formidable. Our medical staff have co-operated with me most heartily to facilitate the carrying out of the idea; and they have remarked to me that in their opinion we are already benefiting by the increased intelligence brought to bear upon the work.

Class certificates are given at the end of each course of lectures, stating the percentage of marks received by each pupil on examination in the different subjects, the candidate signing with motto or number. We have not yet arranged for a final examination before granting diplomas, hoping that this may be taken out of our hands by an independent body of examiners in connection with Registration.

If the Royal British Nurses' Association could see its way to establishing such a Committee, representing England, Scotland, and Ireland, to examine and decide a Nurse's qualification before she is placed on their Register, it would give prestige to those Nurses.

This appears a formidable suggestion, but if deliberately considered I think it may assume a practicable form. There would be expense connected with it, as examiners must have their fees. The examination fees to be paid by Nurses would defray this expense; but what would be of more serious consideration would be the arranging of the uniform examination in the various Hospitals of the three countries. Some independent body should appoint, for this purpose, examiners who would conjointly, with the matron and medical staff of a Training School, conduct the examination of the Nurses of that Hospital.

For the R.B.N.A. to step forward and seek to obtain a curriculum fixed by the Crown, with its attendant qualification for diploma for women wishing to practise Nursing, would not call forth more opposition than it has done in the past, and would, I think, gain supporters. The Association might be to the Nursing world what the “General

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