

## A Uniform Curriculum for Training Schools.

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**T**HE idea of uniformity of education in Training Schools is not by any means a new one. For many years it has engaged the attention and earnest thought of those interested in Nursing, and yet little real progress has been made.

Individual schools certainly have shown a progressive spirit. In these the standard of preliminary qualification has been raised, systematic teaching has taken the place of inefficient work, more subjects have been added to the curriculum, and examinations have meant more than formerly. Books also, written both by superintendents of Training Schools and members of the medical profession, and published expressly for Nurses, have multiplied in great profusion.

These things are certainly an evidence of progress, and so far, are encouraging, but much yet remains to be done; and if other professions have succeeded in bringing order out of chaos, why should not the Nursing profession?

The ideal organisation would call for State recognition, with its fixed curriculum, its Board of Examiners—appointed and paid by Government, its centres, where at fixed periods examinations would be held and degrees of qualification, both in theoretical and practical work, obtained.

At present, however, this ideal seems beyond our reach; still, by keeping the ideal before us, we will reach a higher standard than would be possible were we to rest satisfied with present methods.

It remains then for this Association, in view of the present lack of uniformity, and the various degrees of knowledge which is implied in the term, "Trained Nurse," to take some initiative action, in order to bring about at least a certain amount of uniformity in the various Nursing schools here represented.

Complete uniformity in practical work will never be attainable, nor indeed is it desirable. As long as doctors differ, there will of necessity be diversity of training in the various Hospitals and schools. Still, even in a practical part of a Nurse's education, some approach to uniformity can be attained.

First of all, a Nurse's training should embrace medical, surgical and gynecological, and, if possible, obstetrical nursing; a given time in each of these departments, in a Hospital containing a sufficient number of beds to afford thorough practical experience in these branches. Should the number of beds in a given Hospital be considered insufficient, the term of service

could be lengthened in order to make up for this deficiency; that is to say, if it were decided that in order to obtain a thorough experience in practical work, a Nurse must spend two years in a Hospital containing not less than 150 beds, then it might be determined that in Hospitals containing not less than 75 beds, the term of service be extended to three years. This arrangement would enable many of the smaller Training Schools to come into the Association, and would tend to equalize the experience to some extent, and bring about a certain amount of uniformity in the practical part of our work.

Then, as regards the theoretical education, it will be necessary to decide what shall constitute preliminary qualification. Whether a thorough English education shall be considered sufficient, or some knowledge of anatomy, physiology, hygiene, &c., be required, as is the case in the Training School connected with the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow. Past experience teaches most clearly that in fixing the standard of preliminary qualification high, we will be working along the lines which tend, perhaps, more than any other, to elevate the profession of Nursing to its proper position.

Having arranged the standard of preliminary qualification, it will then be necessary to decide what text-books shall be used; what subjects shall constitute a curriculum; what length of time shall be spent in Hospital work; whether private Nursing shall be recognised as a part of a Nurse's training; how often examinations shall be held; whether examinations shall be written, or oral, or both; and what percentage shall be recognised as a test of a Nurse's knowledge in the various subjects.

Any number of Training Schools therefore attached to General Hospitals containing a sufficient number of beds necessary to furnish the requisite Nursing experience, having arranged a satisfactory curriculum, and agreeing to teach the subjects, and maintain the standard of percentages mentioned in the curriculum, can, if thought advisable, agree to form an organisation which shall be known as "The Training School Association," let us say. This Association can then agree to grant a certificate themselves, or endorse the certificates of such schools as belong to this Association, and recognise as "Trained Nurses" only such as have complied with the requirements laid down by this Association.

To those who may be disposed to look upon this step as a harsh measure, and one likely to embarrass Training Schools attached to small Hospitals, Hospitals for special diseases, &c., it may be explained that while those in charge of such institutions may for a time experience some difficulty in securing pupils, in the end it is calculated to benefit the Nursing profession, and through them, the general public.

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