

The Protection of Training Schools for Nurses.

A CONSIDERATION OF METHODS FOR THE PROTECTION OF TRAINING SCHOOLS FOR NURSES, FROM APPLICANTS WHO HAVE BEEN DISCHARGED FOR CAUSE FROM OTHER SCHOOLS.*

BY MISS LUCY L. DROWN.

WITH Carlyle "we are firm believers in the maxim that for all right judgment of any man or thing, it is useful, nay, essential, to see his good qualities before pronouncing on his bad."

There are several classes of women whose inclination or aspiration leads them to desire a Nurse's training, and, having succeeded in finding the "open sesame" that unlocks the portal to some training school for Nurses, they enter in.

The upright, conscientious Probationer or pupil who has over-estimated her strength or power of endurance or comprehension, is not included in the much-to-be-dreaded applicant mentioned in the subject. Nor is the Nurse named who receives an imperative summons to put self and self-interests more completely out of sight, and thereby is obliged to relinquish, for a time, at least, her long cherished plan.

The training school parasite, if I may so call her, is one who has a mental and moral obliquity of vision, preventing her from right living and thinking. Hospital rules are evils to be avoided. A possible opportunity of escaping a "life of single blessedness" seems often to be the lodestone that draws her to hardships and self-denial. In making an equation she is equivalent to zero, notwithstanding her possible adaptability and capability, because she is minus the essential principles of truth and honesty.

Having attempted with a few strokes to portray this undesirable candidate, the problem arises how to detect and prevent her from taking the place that an honourable woman should occupy.

We may view this question from the point of prevention and that of cure.

The Prevention.—The school connected with the Boston City Hospital has been very fortunate in regard to objectionable Probationers and pupil Nurses.

This fact is due largely to the system we have of inquiring into the antecedents and qualifications of the applicants before coming to a decision as to their merits and deficiencies. A letter is received from a young woman in some remote locality, announcing her intention to enter a Training School for Nurses, and asking for information in regard to making application. Critically scanning the lines, noting construction, penmanship, spelling and other important details, the prospectus of the school, circulars "A" and a circular letter "B" inviting her to reply by sending a brief history of her life, and giving such information as will aid us in ascertaining her qualifications, are sent to her. This circular letter also includes

a request for three names in reference, not of her kindred, and a statement if she has ever been a Nurse in any hospital or asylum, and if she has applied elsewhere, and, if so, when and where. If the reply contains the essential points of education, health and strength, age and general fitness, we forward to the names in reference the letters of inquiry, circulars "F" and "G," consisting of fifteen questions in regard to her previous history for the past three or four years, her work or experience in the direction of Nursing, &c.

If there is any doubt concerning the desirability of the candidate, the application blank, circulars "D" and "E," are not forwarded until the reply to each inquiry made of the names given in reference has been received by us. The applicant in filling out circular "E" must affirm, deny or ignore the question: "Have you been in any Training School or employed in any hospital or asylum?" Thus is completed a chain of five links in testimony, in which it would hardly be possible for the one to evade, or the other to be in ignorance of any previous hospital training of the applicant.

After the arrival of the Probationer, she is under the close scrutiny of the Head Nurses and Senior Nurses, who would be apt to notice any familiarity with the details of hospital work from previous experience, and the printed form "I," containing fourteen questions, is filled out by the Head Nurse at the end of the first and second months. There is also another agency that aids in determining the genuineness of the candidate, and that is the probation of two months, instead of the brief four weeks in the early history of training schools. At the end of the first month of probation, she is questioned by the physician who has the care of the health of the Nurses, in regard to her previous history, and he makes out his report on circular "J."

The way to the position of assistant Nurse is thus guarded on all sides, and we can appreciate the sigh of relief with which the accepted Probationer dons the uniform and enters into the full rights and privileges of the pupil Nurse. At the end of her first six months her work is carefully reviewed, and she has a personal interview with the Superintendent of the hospital and training school.

Not to our knowledge has there been any Probationer or pupil in the school for many years who has come from some other school, without our being acquainted with the fact, and making careful investigation into her previous standing in that school.

It will be of interest to learn the methods of prevention used in other schools.

The Cure.—The Probationer or pupil Nurse who proves herself to be totally deficient of the qualities required by the best standard must be summarily dealt with. The school having excised the offending member will, in the spirit of good fellowship and true interest in all that pertains to Nursing, do all in its power to save other schools from the same trying ordeal.

Twenty years ago the Insane Hospital in New England, in order to defend themselves from unworthy attendants who wandered from one asylum to another, contrived a plan by which all might be on their guard against such invaders. The plan consisted of sending a postal card to all the hospitals in alliance, giving the name of the attendant who had been discharged, and for what cause. The following circular is pro-

* Paper read at the second Annual Meeting of the American Society of Training School Superintendents, held in Boston, Mass., February 13th and 14th, 1895, by Miss Lucy L. Drown.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)