

NURSE: Oh yes! I know all about it; it's paying a guinea and having your name put in a book, but it seems to me waste of money unless I can be kept in cases.

SUPT.: From a financial standpoint doubtless your argument is sound; you are willing to pay the guinea fee on the chance of making £100 a year! So far, so good. But how about the principle?

NURSE: I do not understand.

SUPT.: Has it ever struck you that you owe a duty to your neighbour?

NURSE: Well, I do not know. It seems things are very unfair for us Nurses—we seem to be cheated all round. I fear example is stronger than precept, and when we have to smother conscience, principles become a little hazy. For instance, the first Hospital I entered I signed for a two years' training in the wards. After eleven months I was sent out private Nursing; this seemed to me unjust. The patient paid the Hospital £1. 11s. 6d. for my services weekly; of that I got 4s. 7d., or at the rate of £12 a year, and lost my training as well. During my second year I was constantly sent out private Nursing, and my earnings used to pay for the washing of my more fortunate colleagues working in the Hospital. Where is the principle in that transaction?

SUPT. (*sotto voce*): Echo answers, Where?

NURSE: Now I have just finished my three years and got a certificate, and I come up next to work on my own account, and what do I find? No end of certificated Nurses out of work, waiting, waiting for cases which never come, and half the Nursing of the sick being done by Probationers from the so-called Nurse Training Schools, the public being charged the fee paid to "a thoroughly trained Nurse." How about the principle?

SUPT.: Who is to blame?

NURSE: Why, the Matrons who uphold such a system, and the committees who take our money, and the doctors who employ us, and the patients who put up with us, and—

SUPT.: And everybody but the sentient human being, the woman who, knowing right from wrong, has not the moral courage to refuse to be made the vehicle of such a system, and with determined action crush it out. Nurses have no one to blame but themselves that their conditions of contract are unfair, that their labour is sweated, and that they are forced to compete in the open market with the unskilled worker. It was your own deplorable lack of honour and self-respect that induced you, as a Probationer, to continue to nurse private cases before you were trained. Now that you are certificated, it is merely the result of your own lack of principle that meets you face to face in the competing Probationers, and thus deprives you of work and fees. Remember, the laws of justice are immutable—as you sow, so shall you reap. Recognise your own shortcomings, do not blame principalities and powers; there are none so strong in this or any other world that they can withstand the righteous force of Truth and Justice.

NURSE: You mean—

SUPT.: I mean that if you would compel justice for yourself, you must deal fairly with others, and that the principle of Registration is the recognition of the duty you owe to your fellow Nurses and the public. It is your professional guarantee.

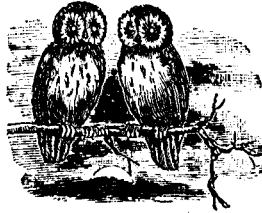
We are glad to notice that many of such Nurses register without the promise of a *quid pro quo*.

Matrons in Council.

A UNIFORM CURRICULUM OF EDUCATION FOR NURSES.

By MISS ISLA STEWART.

(Continued from page 313.)



QUESTION 5 is: "What length of time do you consider necessary for a Nurse to work in the wards of a Hospital before she can be considered fully trained?" With two exceptions, all the Matrons say three years. One lady "thinks that after two years' sharp

training in a good general Hospital Nurses might be sent out to do private Nursing," but to be fully trained she thinks is a matter of years and very varied experience.

Another Matron says that "it must vary with the Hospital and individual." All the other answers are three years, but some are qualified, several say "at least three years." One lady says "in a general Hospital of not less than fifty beds;" another lady suggests that "there should be an examination at the end of each year, and that those candidates who do not pass, should be referred back for three or six months, and that such time should be added to the three years." Another lady recommends three years in a general Hospital, preceded by two in a Children's Hospital, and followed by a course of midwifery. There is clearly a strong feeling among the Matrons, who are practical Nurses, that it requires at least three years' work in the wards to train a Nurse, that is, one year to teach the Nurse the technical work of her profession—bed-making, handling patients, keeping wards, &c.—and that that must be followed by two years in which she may gain the experience which is absolutely necessary.

This experience is gained with more ease and safety in a ward, under the skilled supervision of a trained Nurse and experienced Sister. The habit, not yet, alas, quite extinct, of appointing Sisters after one year's training, is a most pernicious one, leaving as it does so many sick people under the care of a woman, who, however good her intentions may be, has no experience to guide her in their management, and how, I ask, will one who knows so little teach those who are looking to her for training and instruction? No system, however good, can supply the place of experience, which cannot be gained in a day, but is always the result of long, patient observation.

Question 6 is, "In what way would you advise that this period should be passed?" This gives scope for much more varied answers; I will quote a few. One lady says, "Two years in medical and surgical wards, and on day and night duty, the third year to be devoted to special training, as fever." Another Matron says, "that Nurses should equally divide their time between male and female wards." This lady evidently thinks that the great sex question has penetrated our profession. Another Matron suggests, "First year, medical; second, surgical; third year, special work, as gynaecological, &c." Miss Mollett recommends, that the "third year might be spent in studying some

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)