

The American Society of Superintendents of Training Schools.

THIRD ANNUAL CONVENTION.

THE Third Annual Convention of the American Society of Superintendents of Training Schools for Nurses was held in Philadelphia, February 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th, 1896. The Hotel Colonnade was selected as the place of meeting. The Council met Tuesday evening, and Wednesday and Thursday mornings were devoted to the general sessions. About fifty Superintendents answered to the roll call, and the programme, which had been carefully prepared, was carried out in full, not one failing in the duty assigned her. Mrs. Hunter Robb and Miss Irene Sutcliffe sent messages of regret for enforced absence, and the secretary was instructed to make suitable replies.

The Society was welcomed to Philadelphia by the president, Miss M. E. P. Davis. After considering the absolute necessity of raising the standard of training, Miss DAVIS said:—

"Our path lies straight before us, to point out the defects of our present method, or lack of method, to arrange a system that can be applied with but slight variation to the individual needs of both large and small schools, to agitate the matter, to get it to the ear of the School Boards, to discuss the question with the individual members of our own Board with whom our opinions and ideas have weight, to 'talk shop' if necessary, to members of other Boards whom we may meet either socially or officially, to keep it before the minds of the people who are engaged in philanthropic and educational work, to be enthusiastic about it, to be unflagging in our efforts to inspire confidence that what we want is right and just; finally, to do all this in such a way that every one who hears our arguments will be convinced that we are doing this, not for our own aggrandisement or pleasure, but because it is our honest conviction that if we can secure the co-operation of our Boards and establish a universal system of training, the greatest obstacle to the elevation and advancement of the profession will be removed."

Twenty-seven active and two associate members were elected, and it was voted that there should be a third class known as visiting members.

Miss L. L. DROWN reported for the committee on "Eligibility for Membership." This report was so brief that we give it in full:—

"This Committee recommends that for full membership a candidate must be a graduate of a school connected with a general Hospital of not less than fifty beds, giving not less than two full years of training in the Hospital; also that she must be the Superintendent of a Training School complying with the same conditions, and that she shall be acceptable to the society.

The Committee recommends that there shall be two classes of associate members, the second as voted, to be known as visiting members.

First, Assistant Superintendents as provided in Act V. of the Constitution, it being understood that the Superintendent of the school is eligible for full membership.

Second, Graduates of a School where the Superintendent is eligible for full membership who may be in

charge of small general Hospitals of not less than twenty-five beds, or special Hospitals, all such Schools giving not less than two full years of instruction, such members to be acceptable to the Society; such members not to be entitled to vote or hold office.

The initiation and annual fees for visiting members to be the same as for associate members."

Miss SNIVELY, representing the committee formed to consider a Uniform Curriculum, made a model report, far too long and carefully prepared to be embodied in a mere synopsis of the work of the Convention. Special stress was laid on the need of spending two years in a general Hospital of not less than 150 beds, or three in one of 75 beds, and on uniform entrance examinations. The course, as mapped out by Miss Snively, has been used by her with satisfaction during the past year. It was proposed that a copy of this proposed Curriculum should be sent to all Superintendents of Training Schools, with the request that they should try it for a year and report on it at the next annual meeting.

Several papers were presented to the society, one on "Training School Registries," by Miss DANCHE. The Bellevue School and the Illinois School Registries were cited as good examples. Both are controlled as a part of the School management.

"The Graduates' Co-operative Registry is still in the future, but I hope in the near future. The first step toward such a Registry should be a Graduates' club. It is most important that the physicians or other patrons of the Registry should understand from the first that good Nurses can always be obtained by writing, telephoning, or calling at the Registry. It is not necessary that applicants for Nurses should see or talk with the Nurse providing the agent can guarantee a good one. They should never be obliged to look up the Nurse herself at her lodgings.

Many Nurses object to having a price fixed for their services. They say they should do as the doctors do, charge according to the fortune or income of the patient's family, or the difficulty of the case. This is a fallacy. There should be a definite fixed charge known from the start. Probably the best schedule of rates is that fixed on the graded basis.

We who as Superintendents have gained some experience in management and organization, owe it to our graduate Nurses in the work of Nursing so far as in us lies, and with all the influence our position gives, to teach them for their own safety and protection to co-operate and organise societies for mutual protection and advancement."

One of the most valuable papers and one involving a great amount of work, was prepared by Miss Nutting, "A Statistical Report of Working Hours in Training Schools." The statistics were gleaned from 111 Training Schools in England, Canada and this country. The working day, from the hour of rising, varies from 15½ to 17 hours, the average day being 16½ hours, the rising hour 6 a.m., the retiring hour 10.30, allowing 7½ hours for sleep. The hours actually on duty in the wards vary from 8 to 15 hours. In the greater number of Hospitals the Nurses are on duty 10½ hours daily.

"The pupil in a Training School may work harder to receive her training than a labouring man to support his wife and family, for here we find in one of the most difficult works a woman can undertake and her only method of receiving a certain kind of education, it is not a sixty hour week, but one varying from that number to 105 hours."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)