

## Should Undergraduates be sent out to Private Duty.\*

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I MUST confess to approaching this subject with much reluctance, feeling that it should be fairly dealt with from both sides. Yet I have experienced for years such an uncompromising negative as to be unable to regard it as impartially as it should be. In the threefold duty we have to the Nurse, the patient and the School, all are important and none to be disregarded; and although we consider the duty to the Nurse of paramount importance, we will take up the School first.

The arguments set forth by Boards of Managers in favour of the pupils being sent out to private duty are two, the increase of the School revenue and the value of such training. I see no way of answering the argument regarding the finances. If it is necessary for the School to earn a livelihood in that way, it must be endured with the best possible grace, and a constant effort must be made to reduce its disadvantages to a minimum, and put it on such a basis as to make future private duty unnecessary. Certain it is that many of our best Schools were established and maintained in this way, and whether that struggle against such odds has not contributed largely to their vigorous growth and prosperity is a question. Schools are like individuals; it is not always the man whose path has been free from privation who is most successful. The constant effort to overcome obstacles contributes to make his strength and ultimate success.

The value of the training with private patients we cannot dispute, but it should be done in the Hospital under supervision.

We are criticised, and often justly, with bringing up a generation of Nurses pre-eminently fitted for Hospital work, but I assert emphatically that our graduates are not fit for duty in private families who have not had at least three months of the care of special patients, assuming all the responsibility of the patient—her orders, her diet, her room and her belongings—subject to the daily oversight of the Superintendent or her assistants, at the same time receiving ample instruction in the ethics of private duty that she may avoid the pitfalls of heedless conduct or talk, which are more frequently causes for criticism, than inferior nursing. In this way the pupils theoretical training is not interfered with, and she receives the proper

relief for sleep and exercise so frequently forgotten by anxious families while she is on private duty.

In consideration of our duty to patients the question arises, are we fulfilling our whole duty in sending them an unfinished product? Have we morally any more right to send out undergraduates than the law or medical Schools? While patients may be quite willing to accept undergraduates from motives of economy, does that lessen our responsibility in the matter? The practice is deplored by our best medical men as a relic of more primitive times, and it is with their help we must bring the laity, which includes our Boards of Managers, to a realising sense of our moral obligation. This probably will never come about until we have legal recognition and are protected and restricted by law exactly as is the medical profession, a measure, it is hoped, a national organisation will take up vigorously, and not waste any time with pension funds and national badges.

Lastly, are we discharging our obligation to our pupils when we demand that they assume the responsibilities of graduates, while we deliberately interrupt and interfere with that regularity and steadiness in a course of training which are its most valuable features?

Most Schools are largely maintained by the fruits of the labours of their pupils. The School, then, should be in duty bound to give them the best available opportunities. This is not done by sending them out four or five times during their senior year, thereby forfeiting the best of their theoretical instructions. To follow out a regular course during the two years, as, for instance, the one set forth in Mrs. Robb's admirable work, every day is utilised, leaving a very small margin or no margin at all. It is the only possible way of getting through with all that is required of the modern trained Nurse, and the most capable Nurse cannot make up the time lost by the interruption given to private duty.

Another argument against sending out pupil Nurses is the competition with graduates. Nearly all schools have directories for their Alumnae. Accusations are often made by the latter that to the choice cases are sent pupil Nurses. Feelings of the deepest animosity and resentment are thus harboured against the School to its decided detriment. We all know that the loyalty to their *alma mater* of the Alumnae has no inconsiderable bearing upon the prosperity of the School.

Briefly summarizing, then, we conclude that

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 DELICIOUS MAZAWATTEE TEAS.  
 You can tell it by its Delicious Aroma.

\* A Paper read at the Conference of American Superintendents, at Philadelphia, February, 1896.

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