

Asylum Attendant. Miss Nightingale has laid this down as a fundamental principle in "What Makes a Good Training School for Nurses."

"The authority and discipline over all the women of a Trained Lady Superintendent, who is also Matron of the Hospital, and who is herself the best Nurse in the Hospital—the example and leader of her Nurses—in all that she wishes her Nurses to be, in all that training is to make her Nurses."

And, referring to discipline, Miss Nightingale remarks, "Discipline is the essence of training." So that we have the opinion of the indisputable authority for advancing the statement that the training of Asylum Attendants is at present altogether on wrong lines, and that until a Lady Superintendent is in active authority over the female Attendants, the "essence of training," according to Miss Nightingale, is absent from their curriculum.

And, writing of Training in a General Hospital, Miss Nightingale remarks:—"A year's training is simply teaching the Nurse her A B C"; and, again, "A Nurse without training is like a man who has never learnt his alphabet, who has learnt experience only from his own blunders. Blunders in executing physicians' and surgeons' orders upon the living body are hazardous things, and may kill the patient." And again, "Medicine surgery, pathology, and above all hygiene, have made immense strides, partly in consequence of improved tools, improved instruments of observation. Nursing, their agent, has to be trained up to them." So that we conclude from her observations that Miss Nightingale recognises the necessity of a good grounding in general nursing before a person can be considered to be "a trained Nurse," mental or otherwise. Nursing cannot be learnt by theory.

PROTECTION OF THE PUBLIC.

Fourthly, Dr. Wood's argument that "The Royal British Nurses' Association was founded for the purpose of affording information and protection to the public by publishing in a register the qualification of its Nurses" is true; but, as the Founder of the Association, we are in a position to state that this was not its primary object. As our Charter declares, "The said Association was not established for the purpose of gain, but for the purposes of improvement of the profession of Nurses and of the promotion of their efficiency and usefulness."

To accomplish this object, the aim of our Association has hitherto been to raise the standard of *general knowledge*, to encourage the extension of the term of practical training in the Hospital ward, and since the cessation of the term of grace, five years ago, during which, for a short

period, Nurses were admitted without three years' experience in a Hospital for the sick, all Nurses who did not attain to the regulations now in force—at least one year's training in a *General Hospital*, containing 40 beds and upwards, and two years' further experience in the wards of a Hospital—have been rigorously excluded from membership and registration. By the maintenance of this, by no means arbitrary, standard, enormous strides have been made in the practical education of Nurses during the past five years; the large majority of Training Schools having raised their term of training to a three years' course. Dr. Wood's suggestion, of admitting persons with limited and special clinical experience only, cuts at the root of the fundamental principle upon which our Association was founded, and recognises *Specialism* in Nursing, without the absolutely necessary experience in, and knowledge of, *general Nursing*—without which we cannot recognise that a Nurse can be efficient; and should his suggestion be adopted, contrary to the advice and wishes of thoroughly trained Hospital Nurses, the Register of the Royal British Nurses' Association must fail in the object for which he admits it was constituted, "of affording information and protection to the public."

Is it possible for any medical man to advance the argument that specialism in medicine can be anterior and not subsequent to a general medical education? We think not.

JUSTICE.

Fifthly. We cannot agree with Dr. Wood's view that a "wide and generous spirit" is the main influence which should guide Trained Nurses concerning this most vital question. We would call upon our colleagues to do, before all things, what is just—and it cannot be denied that justice compels us to maintain the standard of qualification for membership and registration upon which members have been admitted for the past five years, for which those who have been admitted have paid in labour, time, and cash, and by which many Nurses who have failed to work up to that standard have been excluded. And we dispute, absolutely, the argument that the admission of some 2,000 Asylum Attendants of both sexes into our Association "will add immensely to its strength and stability, and widely extend its large and increasing sphere of usefulness." We go further, and express our firm belief that a very large proportion of the Trained and Certificated Matrons, Sisters, and Nurses, who now constitute the Royal British Nurses' Association, will at once withdraw their names from Membership and from the Register should this most unjust and ill-advised scheme be adopted.

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