

Statistical Report of Working Hours.*

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THE statistical report which it is my privilege to present to you to-day, is a report of the working hours of Training Schools in this country and in Canada. I had at first thought of including in this report, statistics of the working hours of Training Schools in Great Britain, but on examination these were found to be so numerous, and the labour involved in collecting them so considerable, that for the present it seemed best not to go so far afield. They will probably form interesting material for a future report, and will then be of value for purposes of reference and comparison. Speaking generally of English Hospitals, I believe the working day to be a long one. To go on duty at 6.30 or 7 a.m. and come off duty at 9.30 p.m. seems to present a very long day, but this is broken into so frequently—for instance a half-hour in the middle of the morning, an hour for dinner, two or three hours off duty, and time given later for afternoon tea—that the actual working hours are brought down to very nearly the same number as those of many of our Hospitals.

This report is prepared from information received from all of the larger Hospitals of this country of which I have any knowledge, and from many smaller ones, and they range from Maine to California, from Illinois to Louisiana.

The number of Hospital Training Schools written to was 154; number of answers received, 111; number of American Training Schools, 97; number of Canadian Schools, 14. In the State of New York alone information was received from 25 schools; in Pennsylvania, from 18; in Massachusetts, from 13; the remaining 41 were scattered throughout the other States. In some instances I was able to obtain information of only one Training School in a State, though feeling sure there must be others. Of the size of these Hospitals, number of patients, number of Nurses in the School, number of Nurses steadily on duty in the Hospital (and this is an important point, bearing in mind the fact that those that are sent out to private duty may represent a considerable proportion of the senior Nurses; thus, while the staff of Nurses is stated to be, say 25 for every 100 patients, perhaps 10 of these may be out of the School altogether); as to these points I did not ask for statistics.

* Paper read at the Convention of American Superintendents of Training Schools at Philadelphia, February 12th, 1896.

This is a matter of some regret to me now, as in considering working hours, it is wise also to take into consideration the nature and amount of the work to be done, for there is certainly a difference between the amount of work done by the Nurse who cares for 12 patients during 10 hours, and that of the one who has but 5 for whom she is responsible during the same length of time. Beside this, in those Hospitals where the pupil Nurses are sent out to private patients, a greater amount of work is frequently thereby thrown upon the remaining portion of the Nursing staff, and their regular working hours are often greatly increased. In taking the working day from the hour of rising to retiring I find that it varies from 15½ to 17 hours; the average day is 16½ hours long, the rising hour 6 a.m.; retiring hour 10.30 p.m., thus allowing 7½ hours for sleep.

Before going on duty in the wards, each Nurse has a certain amount of work to do in taking proper care of her room. It may occupy but twenty minutes, or half an hour or more, as in some Schools the entire sweeping, cleaning and care of utensils, as well as bed-making, is required of the Nurse.

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 for 10½ hours daily. The following will show the hours of the different Schools:—

In 2 Hospitals Nurses are on duty *in the wards*, for 8 hours daily; in 11 Hospitals, 9 hours daily; in 29 Hospitals, 9½ hours daily; in 14 Hospitals, 10 hours daily; in 31 Hospitals, 10½ hours daily; in 4 Hospitals, 11 hours daily; in 14 Hospitals, 11½ hours daily; in 3 Hospitals, 12 hours daily; in 1 Hospital, 13 hours daily; in 1 Hospital, 13½ hours daily; in 1, and I am glad to say but 1, 15 hours daily.

Hours off duty.—The hours off duty for rest and recreation vary. In the majority of schools 2 hours off duty are given, but in many instances half this time is taken up on certain days with classes or lectures, and in some schools seniors and juniors each have 2 classes and 2 lectures weekly.

Arranged in order, the following is the summary of the hours off duty:—

Daily.—In 1 school the Nurses are given 3 hours off daily. This leaves practically an 8 hour day. In 2 schools, 2½ hours off; in 56 schools, 2 hours off; in 4 schools, 1½ hours off; in 38 schools, 1 hour off; in 1 school, ½ hour off.

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