

graduate nurses, (3) By attendants under the supervision of trained nurses, (4) By adopting the system of co-operative nursing, (5) By members of religious orders, previously trained for these duties.

Of these various methods I would here, as, in my paper on "Educational Standards for Nurses," make my special plea for co-operative nursing whenever such a scheme is feasible. This method, I am happy to say, has already been put into practice in some few schools. For nine years the Illinois Training School, of Chicago, has successfully provided for the nursing of two large institutions with its pupils, thereby adding largely to the experience and competency of the pupils and at the same time helping to elevate the standard of nursing work. It has also been for some years in operation in Milwaukee, and in 1894 we read that "a new system has been introduced into the Utica, N. Y. Hospital, whereby pupils from the Faxton Hospital Training School do the nursing." The writer adds, "The cost to the city is less than formerly even should twice the number of nurses be on duty there." The Emergency Hospital, of San Francisco, is provided for by pupils of the Children's Hospital, of the Sloan Maternity, New York, by pupils from the New York Training School. In Washington the Columbia and Children's Hospital arranged to interchange pupils, and at one time there was a suggestion that the Garfield should also unite with them. Certainly if such special hospitals as those for children, women and children, lying-in hospitals, and hospitals for gynecological and for nervous cases are so situated in the cities that they would co-operate with a general hospital or other institutions, they owe it to the women they take into their schools to do so. The first move must naturally come from the trustees or boards of management, but the actual success depends wholly upon the superintendents of the various schools, and now that we are getting on a more common plane as to teaching and requirements for entrance and graduation, the plan seems more feasible than before. But its accomplishment will require much patience and self-sacrifice on the part of some of our number, and the only certain reward which I can offer to them is the feeling that they will have rendered possible the attainment of the greater good to the greater number.

Some special hospitals offer a post-graduate course to graduates from other schools who wish for further training. The weak point in this system lies in the fact that they cannot offer an all-round experience, and if a graduate from one special hospital enters another of a similar kind offering her a post-graduate course, she only adds to her experience the knowledge of one other special disease. Only when a woman has already a general training and then enters a post-graduate school for the sake of perfecting herself in the cure of one particular class of cases is the post-graduate course made use of in the right way; unless, as already suggested by Miss Davis in her paper on "A Post-Graduate Course," we can find some general hospital whose managers will be willing to organize its school on the post-graduate basis and thus offer opportunities for further development to all kinds of graduates.

Training schools in connection with hospitals for the insane are as yet few in number, but the tendency to increase them is growing, and undoubtedly in the care of this class of patients there is room for much improvement. But can these hospitals any more than

any special hospitals offer sufficient variety in nursing to produce all-round trained nurses? Experience shows that their graduates also try for admittance into general training schools, and are willing to give two more years of their time, without pay, in order to gain more experience in their work. It would seem that the plan adopted by the superintendent of one hospital for the insane might be a good one, that is to appoint a certain number of trained nurses as supervisors and let their staff of assistants be paid permanent attendants. Such also might be the system in emergency hospitals, infirmaries, and homes, and hydro-therapeutic establishments. Hospitals for infectious diseases, the eye, ear, and throat infirmaries should certainly be under the care of graduate trained nurses or else under the co-operative system.

Such plans as I have outlined are given to you in the way of suggestions. Some of them have been tried successfully. No doubt there remain others, still better, to be discovered. In any case it is a duty incumbent upon each trained nurse to use her efforts against the establishment of any more small half-equipped schools and to use her efforts towards improving, where it is possible, those already in existence, and the strong distinction between thoroughly equipped schools and the half-equipped should be to put the best schools on a purely educational basis, withdraw the monthly allowance, increase the time of training, and in return offer a broad and liberal education to women who would become trained nurses.

The writer would beg in conclusion that any one who may read this paper will remember that it has been written entirely without prejudice, or without any feeling of "looking down" upon the small or special schools. It is simply a plea for the broader and more liberal education of all who call themselves trained nurses. It is only meant as an effort to draw us as a profession nearer together, to place nursing, the continent over, on a distinct and sure basis beyond all questioning. It has been said that "the country is swarming with ill-paid stenographers who cannot spell or punctuate, with starving sewing-women who sew badly, with cooks who do not know how to cook, and in many cases with so-called trained nurses who are lacking in tact, good manners, and education." Some women are given the popular term "born nurses" when they are especially remarkable for good sense and adaptability; but we know that nurses are *made* not born, and the rule has but few exceptions, that it is the woman whose general education is the best who is able to do one particular thing best. If this be true in the simplest things how much more is training required for work as complicated as nursing. Dr. Weir Mitchell says that a woman to be a nurse requires education, tact, good sense, good manners, and good health. Given all these requirements, and nothing less should be the standard, we owe it to such a woman in preparing her to be a trained nurse to give her the best that the work of nursing affords. By making this our standard, by lengthening the term of service, and lessening the daily practical work so that her brain may be in a good condition to understand the theory of nursing, and she may do her practical work with more understanding, and by bringing these small and special hospitals into line and touch with our large general schools we shall all be the gainers.

ISABEL HAMPTON ROBB.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)