

Our American Letter.

(By our Special Correspondent.)

TRAINING SCHOOL ORGANIZATION.

THE forms which training school management takes in the United States are quite varied. In England, it is generally understood, there is more uniformity, and the heads of training schools, the Matrons, have on the whole a wider jurisdiction than with us. We use titles somewhat differently, and call the head of a training school of nurses the "Superintendent of Nurses," or sometimes the "Directress of Nurses." The Johns Hopkins gives its Superintendent of Nurses, in addition, the title of "Principal of the Training School," thus accentuating her functions as a teacher. The terms "Matron," with us, is reserved for the head of the housekeeping department in hospital or school, and this department is often separate from, and in nowise subordinate to the nursing department. We have some hospitals—as the Boston City and New York City, in which these two are merged under one head—the Superintendent of the Training School then holds, in addition, the title of "Matron of the Hospital"; and again in many hospitals, especially municipal ones, there is no one head of housekeeping affairs, but the laundry, the linenroom, the storerooms, and the cleaning or scrub woman's department, are conducted by petty officials, more or less independently of each other, the warden, or superintendent of the hospital (who is usually a medical man, but may be a layman), being their ultimate authority. This system is perfectly adapted to giving the greatest amount of trouble with the worst results, and is most likely to be found, in hospitals controlled by what we know as "politics."

On the organization of a School for Nurses in connection with any hospital, one finds essential points of difference. There are those endowed or otherwise undertaken by a voluntary association of women and men, or, more often, the former only, who make themselves responsible for the teaching and training of pupil nurses, and also for the general efficiency of their work, and the standard of their conduct, and who then enter into a business contract with some large hospital to do its nursing for a certain remuneration. Such are the Bellevue and Illinois training schools, each one of which is attached to a large public hospital, and this system is undoubtedly the only one by which the political element can be kept out of the nursing department; these schools, indeed, standing always as shining examples of what the "merit" system can do, as contrasted with "influence" and "pull."

One possibility of danger, it is true, accompanies this otherwise independent and unhampered position of the school, and that is, that a corrupt and powerful political ring may refuse to renew its contract, thus depriving the school of its means of existence. This has actually occurred in one city hospital in a Southern state where the independent school was turned out of doors and a nursing staff organized in accordance with political principles; and it is periodically heard as a threat in Chicago, from the Commissioners of the County Hospital.

Contrasting with this relation, we have hospital and school under one management, and there are two varieties here as regards the position of the superintendent of nurses. In one, the superintendent of the

hospital, whether layman or medical man, is also the direct head of the training school, and the superintendent of nurses, whatever she may be called, is, in reality, only his assistant, being directly subordinated to him in matters which should constitute her own province, such as the selection of candidates, the discipline of the nurses, the arrangement of their hours, study, etc. This is contrary to the teaching of Florence Nightingale, who insists that the whole control and management of nurses as to discipline should be vested in a woman head. However, it is the system of several of our largest and foremost hospitals, and is naturally looked upon as the proper method by many hospital heads, who believe that a woman should always work under the direction of a man, and who resent a woman occupying a position of prestige and authority so close to their own. In the other the superintendent of nurses is given the full control of her own department, and is directly responsible to the governing board of the institution, being subordinate to the superintendent of the hospital only in such matters of general hospital management and policy as official courtesy would properly require. This plan is the most widely adopted of all and may be, on the whole, accepted as the dominant system of training school management. Then there are not a few hospitals, where, for various reasons, the position of hospital head and training school head have been merged into one, and that one given to a woman and a trained nurse. This plan works with marked success, and the administration of women in such positions is most efficient and economical. The Columbia and the Children's hospitals, in Washington; the University of Pennsylvania Hospital, in Philadelphia; the Homœopathic and City Hospitals, in Rochester; the Cancer Hospital, in New York; the Newton Hospital near Boston; and numbers of smaller ones, are excellent examples of the fitness of trained nurses for heads of hospitals.

AN IMPORTANT DEPARTURE.

It has remained for the far South to evolve a new form of training school organization. The University of Texas, situated in the City of Galveston, has recently taken over, as a department of the University, the training school which, for some years, had struggled for existence in connection with the University Hospital. The superintendent has been made one of the Faculty of the University, holding the position of Instructor of Clinical Nursing. She teaches the medical students as well as the pupil nurses on subjects within her province, giving them lectures, and bedside instruction. The pupils receive some of their lectures with the students, and pass an examination at the end of each year. The woman who holds this unique position is a graduate from a Swedish training school who has taken post-graduate work in this country.

The Hostel of St. Luke.

The Hostel of St. Luke, 16, Nottingham Place, W., which, as a Clergy Nursing Home, is doing excellent work, is in urgent need of funds; during the last year the number of patients has been considerably increased, while the income has fallen off; it is hoped, therefore, that special efforts will be made to help this charity.

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