

How to become a Dispenser.

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*In charge of the Ladies' Department, Westminster College of Chemistry and Pharmacy.***I.—THE EXAMINATION AND COST OF TRAINING.**

Of recent years the profession of Dispenser has become open to women. Both the "Pharmaceutical Society" and the "Society of Apothecaries" admit women to their Examinations, and many avail themselves of the privilege. Before being allowed to enter for the minor pharmaceutical examination, the candidate must prove having dispensed for three years; but at the Apothecaries' Hall, there is no such rule. And it is for the latter examination the majority of lady dispensers enter. On passing, the candidate receives a certificate, signed by the examiners, to certify that she has passed the "Assistants' Examination of the Society of Apothecaries, London."

The fee for the examination is three guineas; the fee for re-examination is one guinea.

It is held four times a year—the fourth Wednesday in January, April, July, and October.

The examination is in two parts: first, Practical; second, Theoretical (which is oral).

Unless a candidate passes the practical, he or she is not allowed to proceed further in the examination. But once the practical is passed, if the candidate fails in theory in either subject, she is credited with what she has passed in; and next time has only to work up and enter for what she failed in.

In the practical examination, the candidate has to dispense to the satisfaction of the examiners a given number of prescriptions, such as, a mixture, pills, and an ointment, or an emulsion. Also to answer questions on "incompatibles," and the dispensing of percentage solutions and such like.

The theoretical examination is divided into two parts. First chemistry, second pharmacy, and materia medica.

The chemistry consists of the recognition of certain chemicals. The general principles of chemistry (elementary). The preparations, and properties of the common elements. The preparations, the properties, and tests of the chief chemicals used in medicine.

The pharmacy and materia medica include reading prescriptions. There are specimens to be recognised, and the candidate is expected to be familiar with the preparations of the British Pharmacopœia.

The subjects are so closely connected, that to study one, in most cases, means to study all. The syllabus need not alarm, any would-be candidate, who has no previous knowledge of the subjects, for the entire work centres around the British Pharmacopœia.

The best way to prepare for the examination is to go through a course of study at a pharmaceutical college, as it is important to work systematically. In three or four months one can go over the ground required. And if he has any previous knowledge, at the end of that time the student ought to be prepared. But if he has no previous knowledge in any of the subjects it may take from four to six months. Students' capacity for study vary so with each individual. Many nurses work up for the examination while still doing nursing, if their hours are such as will allow of the time for study, and attendance at classes. In which case by a less frequent attendance, a student, would enter for a longer term, arranging to attend on certain days only.

Evening Classes are also held, which many find most useful.

For those who live in the country, a good plan is to join a Pharmaceutical School, as a correspondent pupil first, and then, having gone through the theory, enter the College for what length of time can be managed, to perfect the theory, and to study the practical dispensing.

The entire cost, including the Examination Fee, use of books and apparatus, ought not to exceed from eight to eleven guineas. This ought to cover a course of study lasting six months. There is great advantage to a nurse in holding a dispenser's diploma. It makes her more capable to hold certain appointments. In many cottage hospitals, the Matron is required to undertake the dispensing. Especially where there are no out-patients, the Committee frequently do not think it necessary to appoint a dispenser. And in some cases where there are out-patients, the Matron is still expected to dispense. So naturally on the appointment of a Matron, preference would be given to a nurse who was capable to take charge of the dispensary, if suitable in other ways.

Some of the small hospitals employ a nurse-dispenser, that is, a certificated dispenser, who, when not on duty in the dispensary, acts as assistant nurse.

It is becoming rather general for doctors in poor neighbourhoods to engage a nurse to assist them; if she can help with, or undertake, the dispensing she will of course obtain a larger salary.

In district nursing a good knowledge of dispensing will often be of great avail. None but a district nurse knows, how, in that branch of nursing, one has to turn one's hands to many things. A nurse likes to complete her professional training, by obtaining a three years' certificate, going through a course of fever nursing, and also gaining the L.O.S. diploma. Now a days, most nurses do not feel satisfied until they have obtained at least an insight into the art of dispensing, even if they cannot spare the time, as so many do, by going in for the examination.

If nursing has to be given up, because of ill-health, as is frequently the case, how useful will the dispensing diploma become then.

A dispenser's hours are not long nor is the work heavy, many who are not strong enough to continue as nurses can easily take a dispenser's post. Many doctors only require a dispenser morning and evening, from about 10 to 12.30, and then again, from about 6.30 or 7 to 9 in the evening. Other doctors engage a resident dispenser. Lady dispensers can obtain very good appointments as dispensers at Provident Dispensaries, and many hospitals also engage them, both in London and the country.

*(To be continued.)***Sanitary Inspectors' Diploma.**

The Education Department has approved the local examinations held by the Examinations Board of the National Union of Teachers as qualifying successful candidates to sit for the diploma of Sanitary Inspector. Holders of the diploma, the examinations for which are under the supervision of the Sanitary Inspectors' Examinations Board, are eligible for appointment as Sanitary Inspectors under the Public Health Act (London) 1891.

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