

theoretical knowledge as the young doctor does his before entering the hospital wards. This in itself would be of infinite value, and would render the nurse's work both intelligent and interesting from the outset."

Again we quote: "The time may not have arrived for training-schools in this country to take such a long step in advance as to adopt the plan of the Glasgow Royal Infirmary in giving a preliminary course of instruction. Boards of Trustees might demur at the additional expense, and it might take a good while to educate them to an appreciation of its advantages."*

And again: "A knowledge of housekeeping, so essential in a nurse's work, is so often found lacking in the young women who make application, that until domestic economy becomes a branch of education in our public and private schools, I fear we cannot hope for much improvement. The home training is all that can be counted upon, and we know this part is often most sadly neglected. This would seem to be a most important requirement for a course in nursing."†

In a recent number of the London NURSING RECORD we note that the necessity for this preliminary training is very strongly urged by Miss Stewart, Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, one of the oldest and greatest and most important hospitals in the world. Apart from these publicly expressed views, which the writer has noted in the way in which one always appropriates evidence bearing upon a matter much in one's thoughts, the general consensus of private opinion has almost invariably been, "It is an excellent idea, but how can we carry it out?"

The natural and inevitable inference from these statements is that existing methods of instruction in hospital training-schools have proved unsatisfactory in this particular direction and are in need of reform. The methods in general use in these schools at present conform very little to such as have been excepted as intelligent and effective in other educational institutions of somewhat similar scope and purpose. The school for nurses claims standing-room among schools whose purpose it is to teach a profession, precisely as the medical school teaches its graduates to practise medicine, or the law school prepares its graduates for admission to the bar. The scope of such a school is bounded only by the largest conception of the requirements of that profession, by the aspirations and ability of its faculty, and the means at their disposal. All professional schools, therefore, having largely one purpose, it may

* "Uniformity in Methods of Teaching Ward Work," by Miss Riddle, Boston City Hospital. (1898).

† "What has been accomplished towards a Uniform Curriculum," by Miss M. W. McKechnie, superintendent of nurses, New York Infirmary for Women.

be assumed that they should possess a certain general similarity of methods, such as definite requirements for admission, and such a graded arrangement of the subjects of instruction that the student may be carried forward in his studies from year to year in an orderly and logical way. Requirements for admission to all professional schools vary greatly in the different professions and in different schools of the same profession, but they are the subject of continual agitation and continual improvement. Not only is it demanded that the applicant for admission to great professional schools shall have a good foundation in general education, or, better still, a college degree, but that he shall have been in some way prepared for the professional school by studies which are directly preliminary, and the tendency of schools and colleges is to so prepare the student by electives. The college degree in an applicant for admission to a medical school may in fact stand not only for general preparatory knowledge, but also for special attainments in the line of biology, physics, and chemistry, all leading up to practical work and having an important bearing on his future career. In a proper and logical system of education the acquisition of new knowledge must depend to a considerable extent on what has been previously acquired.

How far do training-schools for nurses conform to the requirements of such a system? What are our requirements for admission? What are our methods of instruction? An inspection of such circulars as are furnished by our schools for the information and instruction of applicants shows plainly that we have few arbitrary requirements of any kind, and these relate mainly to age, size, and physical conditions. Stress is usually and wisely laid upon good character as an essential, but upon the important point of educational qualifications or attainments, such as might reasonably be supposed to prepare one for a profession, there is a silence which speaks louder than words. Among the sixteen to eighteen questions of which an average application-blank may be composed, a brief "where educated?" may be all that suggests to the applicant that any educational qualification is necessary or even desirable. Here and there an effort has been made to establish a definite standard by a statement that applicants must pass certain prescribed examinations before or after admission, but these are neither uniform nor general, nor do they extend in any case beyond the range of the simplest elementary knowledge afforded by a common-school education. The last word on the subject of educational requirements proper is said when we remind those who apply that women

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