

of superior education and cultivation will be preferred. We realize, to be sure, that many do not concede the claims which nursing makes to be ranked among the professions, and to them and others the possession of a "superior education" is neither necessary nor desirable. One may pause here just long enough to remind those holding these opinions that they are not new, but have been held at various times concerning every one even of those professions which we now justly call learned—theology, law, medicine, the scientific professions, and teaching. Thirty-five years ago, says President Eliot, some of the medical students could hardly write, so that the taking of notes was difficult for them. It is at present our conviction that neither the public generally nor even the governing bodies of schools for nurses have yet come to any adequate appreciation of what may reasonably be expected from the nursing profession, and hence arise some of the difficulties met with in our efforts to improve present conditions. Until there is a clearer and more general understanding of the possibilities which the work of nursing holds, we shall be unable to advance appreciably our present requirements for admission. It is also to be steadily borne in mind that a school for nurses does not merely teach and train as many properly qualified candidates as its size, equipment, and teaching force permit. It carries on the nursing work of the hospital, and has the responsibility of keeping up at all times for the necessary work of the hospital a certain specified number of pupils. So long as these conditions exist, requirements, being governed by imperative considerations, must remain in a measure adjustable. Of equal importance also stands the fact that the education of the average candidate is a mere chaos of information of little value to herself or to anybody else. Of those matters which most nearly concern us in every-day life she is pitifully ignorant, having been systematically shielded from every trial or difficulty, often even from the necessity of making an effort of any kind which she did not choose to make. Even when she does not lack natural mental capacity, the ability to use her hands to any satisfactory purpose, to accomplish definite results in any direction, has been almost universally found wanting. It goes without saying that the higher qualities, judgment, self-control, habitual decisiveness, discretion, an understanding of the dignity of labor, are largely undeveloped. -Such preliminary education as would qualify one aright for the work of nursing the sick is hard to find anywhere. We are educated in a general way by every circumstance and condition of our own lives from the day of our birth, and the nature

and extent of this education are as powerful factors in determining our fitness for responsibilities as any accumulation of facts acquired through the indirect medium of books. "Studies," says Lord Bacon, "do give forth directions too much at large unless they be bounded in by experience," and he adds, "there is a wisdom about them and above them won by observation."

It speaks volumes for the educating power of the school of nursing that from such untrained and wrongly educated material (always the best that offers) there are finally sent forth so many capable, thoughtful, skilful women who ultimately become useful to the community and a credit to the profession. The business of the school for nurses, however, is to teach the work of nursing, and its definite responsibilities should begin and end somewhere. While clearly at present it is our duty to take the best which comes, and to supply as far as possible a training in the school which the applicants should have received before coming to it, and which is the only foundation upon which we can build, we should not be unmindful of the necessity of continuing our efforts to advance the standards of requirements for admission, and to relieve the school of a task of extraordinary difficulty by including among these qualifications much that now forms a part of the course of instruction. A comparison of our methods of instruction with those of other schools shows remarkable points of difference. There must be a best way of mastering any subject, and while each presents its own peculiar difficulties, to be met by special provisions and measures, yet this cannot be so utterly unlike others as to form no part of any system or group, or to find in the general scheme of education no teaching or training which may serve as a guide. If it be suggested that the nature of this subject is so different from others that methods may be wisely and safely employed in its teaching which would not be so considered if applied to other subjects, we must reply that facts as we know them do not corroborate such a belief. By our present methods the pupil, with few suitable qualifications, no previous study, no preliminary training, is brought at once into the practical side of her work. A great amount of practical work is placed upon the pupil long before she has been prepared by definite or systematic instruction. Immediately upon entrance she is placed at totally unfamiliar domestic duties requiring careful and exact performance, and involving an appreciation quite above the common of the necessity and importance of such duties. She prepares and serves foods, and receives her instruction in this most important subject months

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