

Nursing Progress in Japan.

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Fifteen years have passed since the first training-school was organised in Japan—years of wonderful progress for the nation. Japanese women have in this time come forward to stand side by side with women of other nations, and in this progressive movement the nursing profession has proved no insignificant factor.

America, when feeling the necessity of organising training-schools for nurses, went to England for help and counsel. After seeing the good accomplished through them here, and having a desire to help her neighbours, America in turn carried the system to Japan, and at a time when Japan was most anxious to adopt any new measure which would prove of value to the country.

So it came to pass that the first training-school for nurses in Japan was organised and for a time controlled by Americans. At first, like all new movements, it was carefully watched, to see if it really was just what was wanted to meet the demands. Japanese officials, who at that time were in America and Europe, looked into foreign methods to compare them upon returning home with those of their own school. There are no people more quick to recognise merit in any enterprise than the Japanese, nor can a people be found who will more quickly detect weak points. Notes of merit and demerit were carefully made, and soon it was pronounced a good and desirable thing. If really good, it was worth copying, and shortly a second and much more important school was opened, this second school having for its patroness no less important a person than the Empress. It was organised in connection with the Empress's hospital, and, of course, received the sanction and support of the government. Thus, with the commencement of the training-school movement, was the nursing profession placed upon a very firm foundation, and at once became popular.

The primary object in establishing training-schools for nurses in Japan was to provide for young women an additional profession, by means of which they could become self-supporting and at the same time maintain their social position and dignity. A few had become teachers, but the demand for their services was small, and the training-school movement, coming at this time, proved a blessing indeed. The Japanese did not consider all methods in use in foreign schools perfect, and decided to improve upon them. If training-schools were to benefit women, they should, it was thought, be educational institutions,

and pupils in these schools should have similar advantages to those in other schools. They must be treated as scholars, and an entrance examination was required. The nurses were to be self-supporting, the hours of duty must be fixed, and those for study, lectures, and recitations many. Most of the applicants were graduates from good schools—young women of high purpose, with a determination to succeed, and to such success is assured. The course was two years in the hospital. Nurses were not to be sent out during their term of training. Occasionally a nurse was allowed to pass a few days at the home of some person whose friendship was desirable to the advancement of the cause of nursing, and in such cases the superintendent of the school made a daily visit to the nurse and patient. Some very valuable and permanent friends were in this way secured to the school and profession. It was most gratifying to see with what tact these pupil nurses, themselves so young in their work, introduced new methods into these homes, and also how gladly all instruction was received. These little women from the first became valuable instructors to those less favoured than themselves.

Until the time of the organisation of training-schools Japan had no system of nursing in the hospital or home. If a member of a family was for any cause taken to a hospital, the other members of the family went in turn to stay with and care for him, and it was from their own trained nurses that the Japanese learned the necessity of better care for the sick. Is it surprising that before the first graduates had received their well-earned diplomas they were engaged to fill positions? Some were to enter government hospitals as chief nurses to have charge of the nursing staff, others to do private nursing. The former were to be paid eight yen, or Japanese dollars, monthly, besides board and laundry; the latter received ten yen monthly. This was considered an extravagant sum, and compared not unfavourably with the fifteen dollars a week paid our first graduates.

It is pleasant to remember how from the first the services of these graduate nurses were appreciated, and with what respect and consideration they were treated. The time soon came when they were given an opportunity to prove to their country, as in no other way they could have done, the value of their training. China and Japan were at war, and the government called for nurses to care for the sick and wounded soldiers. The pioneer school responded first and sent a Matron with a band of graduate nurses, other Matrons and bands of nurses went also, and all won laurels for themselves and for their profession. With the war came an increase in the salary of the nurse, and she received double the amount

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