

the gathered experience of a thirty-five years' nursing career.

The Medical Profession are by no means unanimous, in our Country, as to the necessity of a fixed curriculum for Nurses, and what should constitute a Trained Nurse (I use the term for want of a better), but it must be borne in mind that it was only in the eighties of last Century that that Profession became a Corporate body. We can scarcely expect in so short a time that the want should be universally felt of a body of women specially educated on fixed lines to give assistance to them in their work.

Physicians and Surgeons will always have their individuality to be considered with their methods of treatment; but a Nurse must have a certain amount of information before she is capable of adapting herself to their various requirements, otherwise it would entail a great deal of misunderstanding of instructions given.

We would like to do away with what is so aptly called the daring of inexperience. There are many Medical men who are of opinion that the time is not far distant when the term Qualified Nurse will require to have a definite meaning, and not be left to the arbitrary decision of the various Hospitals to grant Certificates, following upon their own private examinations which may, or may not, be of practical value in regard to the fitness of the holder for carrying on the work of Nursing.

The argument that there are many good Nurses who have received little but empirical training will not hold good any more than the same applied to the practice of Medicine half a century ago. As it stands to-day with us any woman who holds a Certificate to the effect that she has spent three years in a general Hospital containing not less than forty beds can register, provided there is nothing against the moral character.

It is not the size of the Hospital I object to—given a good Doctor and a capable Nurse in charge who would not grudge to devote their time to teaching, I believe the best results may be obtained. What I maintain is that residence alone is an insufficient guarantee of ability, or fitness for the work, without some test of the knowledge gained during the period of residence in Hospital. This, I think, is where Registration with us, fails to meet a much felt want.

The fact of there being an examination by an outside body would be a valuable stimulus to the nurse all through her term of residence, and would do something towards preventing merely mechanical work, adding zest, thus causing happiness which we cannot do without.

We speak of the old and new order of things, if we compare the generations one with the

other, and the conditions under which they have lived, it seems like constant revolution, but in reality it is a succession of events leading to changed conditions. There is no break in the link, it is progress not revolution, it is the same with the so-called "Profession of Nursing."

As the science of Medicine has advanced, a more intelligent assistance has been called for, by some, an instructed intelligence, which can grasp the meaning of technical instructions left for the guidance of the Nurse.

PRINTED ADDRESS.

To prevent repetition of platitudes you will find my ideas on this point in a printed form which any of you may have upon application to me, at the close of this meeting.

THE OLD REGIME.

When I first entered St. Thomas's Hospital, London, nearly thirty-five years ago, a year's residence was considered sufficient length of time to prepare one for the taking of responsible positions, even to that of Matronship.

I am sorry to say this custom is not yet quite obsolete in some of our British Hospitals.

The year mentioned was an immense improvement upon what had been, before the time of Miss Nightingale establishing her school at St. Thomas's in conjunction with Mrs. Wardroper, (Matron of that Hospital), after Miss Nightingale's return from the Crimean War.

The value and far reaching influence of the work done by that Lady requires no comment from me, it will live for ever.

For Mrs. Wardroper I would like to say one word; the single-handed combat which she undertook with the general bad condition, and ignorance, which prevailed at that time in the Nursing World, was being nobly fought, when Miss Nightingale, in search of a Hospital wherein to establish a school for the training of nurses, came upon and recognised the good work being done by Mrs. Wardroper, and chose St. Thomas's Hospital as the centre for her operations.

This school being established, class work was gradually introduced, in addition to the practical work, until it has grown into an elaborate system, and as I have remarked elsewhere, had St. Thomas's remained the only training school for Nurses, we should have had uniformity, and possibly the authorities would have risen to the demands made upon them, but, as there was perfect freedom in the matter, a legion of schools, so called, sprang up, each establishing according to their individual ideas a curriculum for the instruction of their Nurses, producing a veritable chaos of training. We require to know the method of each school before we can estimate the value of the Certificate given.

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