

## The American Nursing World.

### THE CARE OF INVALID CHILDREN.

Miss Lillian Wald, who has met with such great success in Nurses' Settlement work in New York City, is greatly interested in the introduction of a force of trained nurses into the public schools to follow upon the medical examination of the pupils, and care for those children who are excluded on account of physical unfitness. The inspection of the pupils of the public schools by the examiners of the Board of Health has been very rigid this year, and more than 2,000 children have been excluded either on account of some contagious disease or else for an unclean state of the body and clothing which has made them unfit to mingle with other pupils.

Recently, Dr. Lederle, President of the Board of Health, and Mr. Burlingham, President of the Board of Education, dined informally with Miss Wald at the Settlement and discussed the scheme of trained nurses for these excluded cases. The plan is on the same lines as that pursued by the London School Nurses' Society, and which has worked so successfully here. Its sole purpose is to take in charge the pupils barred and to go to the homes to see that the mothers follow out the requirements of the child faithfully and intelligently.

The establishment of a corps of trained nurses in connection with the medical inspection of public schools was one of the subjects discussed at a conference held in Dr. Lederle's office between Dr. Lederle and some of his staff who are directly interested in the work of the Board of Health in the public schools, Mr. Burlingham and Dr. Maxwell, Superintendent of City Schools. While nothing whatever was decided regarding it, and the whole scheme is as yet theoretical so far as New York is concerned, those present are said to have favoured it, and the Board of Health will seriously consider the advisability and practicability of its introduction."

### THE QUESTION OF STATE REGISTRATION.

Discussing "Trained Nurses and the Public," an American contemporary says:—

The trained nurse is a recent invention. There were competent nurses before training-schools for nurses were invented, but with the development of the medical profession, and especially with the development of conservative surgery, a skilful nurse became a necessity of progress.

The remarkable reduction of the mortality rate in hospitals, on the battlefield, and in homes is not all due to the doctors. No small share should be accredited to their auxiliaries, the trained nurses.

With the extension of expert knowledge among men and women who have adopted nursing as a vocation there has been an extension of imposture practised with considerable success by persons

without training; but clever enough to dupe the helpless and the unsuspecting.

The time has come when the public should be protected against a form of swindling which is increasing, which is brutal, but profitable to its practitioners. The true trained nurse should be registered by the State as doctors and pharmacists are. The conscienceless impostors who are abroad as trained nurses ought to be subjected to an exclusive penalty.

No licence should issue to a trained nurse who has spent less than three years in a completely equipped medical training-school. In the beginning two years' instruction and practice were deemed ample. Experience has shown that at least three years should be devoted to acquiring skill, which is in increasing demand, and which assures its possessor a good return on the investment.

Nor can the examination for admission to a nurses' training-school be too rigorous. One qualification of the thoroughly satisfactory trained nurse cannot, unfortunately, be ascertained by mere catechism. It is the qualification of temperament.

No amount of scientific instruction can make an acceptable nurse out of a human being deficient in sympathy or indifferent to tact in the chamber of invalidism. The heartlessness of a cold nature might easily nullify the benefits of medicine and defeat the ends of benign surgery. But the unfit nurse is found out in time, and in no other calling is reputation more certain to become a guarantee of success or of rejection of the unfit individual.

Thus far the trained nurse is distinguished not only by achievement in restoring the ill to health in private employment or elsewhere, but by a pervading and noble spirit of interest in humanity without private recompense.

The learning acquired in the nurses' training-schools has become, in fact, a public asset. It ought to be carefully guarded in private as well as in public interest.

The graduates of recognised training-schools have formed a general *alumnæ* association, which is now seeking uniform legislation protecting alike the nurses and the public from imposture.

A Bill to this end will be laid before the General Assembly of Illinois next winter. It ought to be passed promptly. It ought to safeguard the public not only against ignorance and brutality among pretended nurses, but stringently also against mushroom concerns calling themselves training-schools and selling diplomas for cash to any applicant after a few months' farce of pretended instruction and practice.

The State Board of Health should have over nurses' training-schools and credentials the same control that it has over medical colleges and doctors.

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