

## METHODS OF EDUCATION IN HOSPITAL TRAINING-SCHOOLS.

On entering the training-school the pupil nurse begins at once to do practical work in the wards. At first she does only the simplest things—cleaning, bed-making, carrying meal-trays, &c. Under the instruction of the older nurses she is gradually taught to do all the ordinary hospital nursing.

After she has been working a variable length of time she begins to study text-books and attend recitations and lectures. These studies have to be carried on in the rush of her hospital work. When on night duty she is often awakened early so as to be able to attend lectures or recitations. The demands of the hospital on the nurses are constantly increasing. In the effort to get the routine work done she has no time to digest and assimilate the great mass of experience and teaching which she is daily receiving. She cannot stop to consider the reason for what she is doing. In fact, the course of instruction is often so arranged that the nurse learns to do part of her work from the example of older nurses before she studies the principles which it is necessary for her to know to properly understand what she is doing.

The teaching of the nurses is done chiefly by the superintendent of nurses. Her position is largely an executive one, and she is selected by the hospital in great part for her executive ability. In many of the schools she teaches in addition to nursing proper, anatomy, physiology, chemistry, materia medica, pathology, &c. For her knowledge of these subjects she is usually dependent on text-books and on the instruction which she herself received in the same or some similar training-school, for at present there is no opportunity even for the head nurses to get better instruction.

The teaching of the superintendent of nurses and her assistants is usually supplemented by courses of lectures given by a number of different persons, most of whom are physicians on the hospital staff. The list of these lectures, given by men who are authorities or leading specialists in the subjects treated, makes a very impressive showing in the annual reports. These lectures are, however, not always well planned for the needs of the nurses. They are often incomplete and disconnected. As a whole they form an unimportant part in the education of the nurse.

The teaching in the training-schools is chiefly didactic. There are few charts and little apparatus used in illustrating the lectures. There is little that could be called laboratory work—a method of instruction which is considered most important in teaching sciences even in the grammar and high schools.

From this brief consideration of the hospital training-schools it is evident that the changes most urgently needed are: (1) leisure for study; (2) in-

struction in the principles of nursing before beginning practical work; (3) instruction by those who are especially fitted to teach; (4) improved methods of instruction.

## NURSES SHOULD BE EDUCATED FOR A PROFESSION

The ideal to be kept in mind in the training of the nurse is, as Dr. Cabot has said, to make it a preparation for a profession. The apprentice learns his trade by doing the simplest things first, and then learning to do that which is more difficult from the example and instruction of those who have been working longer. The training of the nurse resembles an apprenticeship far too much. That method would be more suitable if she were always to remain a hospital nurse; but she is being trained for private nursing. Here she must adapt herself to different conditions. She will not have a head nurse or house officer at hand day and night to advise her. In private nursing she needs good powers of observation, clear reasoning and sound judgment—qualities which are not developed by the apprenticeship system.

A profession differs from a trade in that the work of the profession is preceded by a study of the principles on which the work is based. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology, which has such an excellent reputation for fitting men for practical work and responsible positions, gives its students little or no practical experience in the work of their profession, but it teaches them the principles on which that work is to be based. It teaches those principles only in a small way by lectures and text-books, much more by work in the laboratory, the workshop, and the field. In fitting for the medical profession, four years are spent in studying the principles of medicine, and of that time the greater and most important part of the instruction is in the dissecting-room, the laboratory, and the clinic. Is it reasonable that utterly different methods of instruction should be employed in the education of a nurse?

The nurse should have some knowledge which the physician possesses. For example, she should understand the principles of asepsis, of domestic and personal hygiene, the chemistry of cooking and the nutritive values of food just as well as the physician, and she should be taught them by similar methods.

## AN INSTITUTION IS NEEDED TO GIVE A PRELIMINARY COURSE OF INSTRUCTION.

Hospital experience is important and necessary for the medical student, and it will doubtless soon be part of the required work for a degree in all the best schools. It rightly comes at the end of the medical course. In the same way the hospital work of the nurse should be preceded by a course of study in the principles of nursing. This course should cover at least one year. It would probably,

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