

Matrons' Marks and Nurses' Examinations.

ROYAL SOUTH HANTS AND SOUTHAMPTON HOSPITAL.

DEAR MADAM,—I have read with much interest the various letters that have lately appeared in your paper re nurses' examinations and certificates. I venture to think that the Matron's influence on a nurse's certificate is generally far greater than the letters would lead one to suppose. I enclose a copy of the regulations under which our certificates are given, and which have been in force many years, in which Matrons' marks are given their full value. I am certain almost all Matrons have some system by which they record their views in a nurse's certificate, though they may not have come forward to say so. I am, as you know, Madam, keenly interested in nursing education and in the improvement of nursing; but I entirely disagree with the idea of a set "practical examination." The practical part of a probationer's education cannot by any possible means be successfully tested in an examination. A certain readiness, quickness, and smartness might be shown, but the real, solid, practical worth of a nurse can only be tested by daily and hourly examination in the ward itself, and that alone is the only really truthful record of a nurse's practical application of her theoretical training. Every Matron receives reports in some form or another from her Sisters, and from that and her own observations judges of the practical work of her probationers. The deft touch, the clever manipulation, the unflinching accuracy, the unwearied patience, the sixth sense for a patient's needs—all these and similar details are not to be gauged by a set examination; the nurse needs to be watched long and carefully, not scampered through fifteen minutes' bandaging and bedmaking—a perfectly futile method of judging her practical work.

But I do most firmly believe in a sound basis of theoretical knowledge underlying the nurse's practical dexterity, and that can and must certainly be tested by examination.

There is no need for the nurse to burden her mind with useless details, or to go through a course that is in advance of her needs, but her theoretical training should, above all things, be *thorough*; she should not be allowed to merely half-grasp a fact before she is hurried on to the next, until her mind is a medley of wrong impressions.

She had far better know a few things well than be burdened with that half-knowledge which is almost worse than ignorance. Of course, one of the greatest difficulties in the thorough training of probationers is the general pooriness of their education, quite irrespective of their social position. Many of them seem never to have been taught either to think, learn, or to apply what they have been taught, and are wonderfully slow to grasp an unfamiliar fact. Of course, I make this statement with many, often brilliant, exceptions; but I am speaking of the majority.

Whether a strict educational test would meet the difficulty I am not prepared to say, but I do not think it will be remedied until the general average education (not cramming) of English girls improves.

But I am strongly in favour of continuing the pass theoretical examinations, and, as now, testing a nurse's practical knowledge by her work in the wards.—Yours faithfully,

M. MOLLETT, Matron.

A PROBATIONER'S CERTIFICATE may be filled in as follows:—

- I. Very good examination.
- II. Good examination.
- III. Satisfactory examination.
- IV. Fair examination.

Her conduct may be described as having been—

- I. Exemplary.
- II. Very good.
- III. Good.
- IV. Satisfactory.

A probationer who has not passed a fair examination, and whose conduct has not been satisfactory, will not be entitled to a certificate.

The maximum amount of marks a probationer can obtain is 600. These marks are divided in the following manner:—

Exam. in Anatomy and Physiology...	...	100
„ Surgical Nursing	100
„ Medical „	100
Nurse's Notes on Cases	100
Matron's Marks (for Ward Work and Good Conduct)	200
		600

Half marks are the minimum amount required to pass an examination.

A probationer must pass successfully two out of the three examinations, obtain half marks for case-taking, and half Matron's marks to obtain a certificate.

A probationer who fails to pass her examination will be allowed to attend a second course of lectures and make another attempt to pass her examination. This applies, however, to one course of lectures and one examination only.

Probationers will take notes of three cases—one surgical and two medical, or two surgical and one medical—during their second and third years. These notes will be submitted to the Surgical and Medical Lecturer respectively.

Practical Points.

Prevention of Blindness at Birth. The inflammation of the eyes of new-born infants is a contagious disease, which can only be cured if taken in time and treated with proper care under a doctor's direction.

Many thousands of children have lost their sight from this cause, and it has been found in England that 30 per cent. of the pupils in schools for the blind were blinded by neglect or wrong treatment of this disease.

The following directions for treatment are most important:—

1. Immediately after the birth of a baby, before doing anything else, wipe the eyelids and all around the eyes with a clean, soft, dry linen rag, and soon after wash these parts with warm water.

2. Do not expose the baby to cold air, as cold is one cause of this eye disease.

The disease can be easily known by redness, swelling, and heat of the eyelids, and by the discharge of yellowish matter from the eye. *Immediately send for a doctor*, and keep the eyes as clean as possible by gently washing away the matter every fifteen minutes, both by day and night. *It is the discharge of pus that does the mischief.*

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