

The Minimum Curriculum of Education and Standard Qualifying for the Registration of Trained Nurses.*

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MADAM PRESIDENT AND LADIES,—I beg to thank you for the honour you have conferred on me in inviting me to contribute a paper on what, in my opinion, should constitute a curriculum of education, and a minimum standard qualifying for registration as a trained nurse. I have also to thank you for appointing me as Hon. Vice-President for South Africa of the International Council of Nurses.

I regret greatly I cannot be present at the International gathering, as it would undoubtedly be a great help to me in many subjects in connection with my duties as Matron, but owing to my recent appointment to the New Somerset Hospital I am unable to avail myself of the opportunity thus afforded by the Council of acquiring knowledge by the experience and suggestions of women workers.

The Government requirement here is, that three years' training is a necessary qualification for registration as a trained nurse. The conditions of that training are somewhat various.

This hospital, and many others in this country, receive women on probation for three months; at the expiration of that time the Matron must decide whether the candidate is capable of continuing the training, and the candidate whether she is willing to do so. The decision being in the affirmative, the probationer signs an agreement to the effect that, health permitting, she will remain in training for three years from the date of her entrance as probationer. If, however, during the term of agreement she should wish to leave the hospital, she may do so by payment of a sum of money mentioned in the agreement.

She may then, if she so wish, enter another hospital, where she can receive an appointment according to her experience.

Much dissatisfaction is thereby caused amongst the nurses already there, as, naturally, in their turn they hope for any senior positions which may occur.

When the nurse has completed her three years' training in all, she may apply as candidate for the Cape Government Examination, and, if successful, she is duly registered as a qualified nurse, although she may have gained her experience in several hospitals.

I am enclosing with this a copy of the terms under which pupil nurses are accepted to train in this hospital, and the agreement form.

I have sent a letter to many Matrons of hospitals out here asking the trained Matrons' and nurses' opinion whether it would not be an improvement that, in the future, nurses should have three years' experience at one hospital before entering for registration with the idea of getting a petition for an amendment of the Registration regulations signed by the Matrons and nurses of the hospitals out here to the effect that three years at one hospital shall be necessary before being registered as a trained nurse. If the amendment

* Presented to the International Council of Nurses, Berlin.

comes into force it will undoubtedly be a great help in calming the everlasting restlessness that exists out here, and eventually lead to more of our hospitals being managed by Colonial-trained women.

In my opinion a preliminary training for pupil nurses at their own expense would be a most beneficial advance. It would be a great assistance in finding the right women and from first entering a ward the probationer would be able to comprehend more clearly the nature of her profession.

I would suggest that the first-year probationers should attend lectures and classes held by the Matron of the hospital or by Sisters, and in the second and third years lectures from doctors. At the end of each series of lectures an examination should be held. On the result of the examination in the first and second years should depend the promotion of the nurse to the second and third-year classes respectively, ending in the third year with the final examination arranged by the Medical Council.

Regarding lectures, this is practically what is done here, with the exception that the three years may be spent in different hospitals, or under one doctor in a private hospital for the third year.

THE PREPARATORY INSTRUCTION OF NURSES.

This is no new suggestion, as it is, I believe, already carried out at the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, and the London Hospital. It would undoubtedly be of great benefit to all if hospitals could draw their probationers from a recognised school, which could be attended by the pupils at their own expense, and if the work of such a school could be performed in all its branches by the pupils under the direction of qualified managers. All the ordinary domestic subjects could be practically dealt with, as well as the usual lectures on medical and surgical subjects. The nurse would be much more fitted then to enter a sick ward than are the majority at the present day.

This, ladies, but inadequately expresses what, in my estimation, should constitute a sufficient curriculum for the equipment of a trained nurse.

The Abuse of Hospitals.

Much has been written recently as to the abuse of hospitals by those who can afford to pay for treatment. The *Chronicle* is of opinion that such misuse is the natural outcome of a system which regards only the millionaire and the pauper.

Londoners have practically no choice between the heavy drain entailed on the purse by resorting to a private nursing home or the ward of the general hospital.

For more than a hundred years Paris has had its municipal hospital for paying patients. Patients are charged on different scales, according to the number of privileges enjoyed by them. The minimum rate is 28s. per week, inclusive of every expense—surgical and other fees.

The minimum in a London hospital paying ward is three guineas per week, and this does not include the surgeon's fee.

In Scandinavia there is an admirable system. There are no free hospitals. On the contrary, hospital treatment is within the reach of all, but everyone must pay according to his means. The pauper patient is paid for by the district from which he comes; his maintenance is a charge upon the rates.

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