

tion should require a definite training in the care of medical, surgical, gynæcological, and obstetrical patients. As to the length of time which shall be devoted to each subject, it is quite impossible to set any arbitrary limits. The different services in any hospital may vary widely in the opportunities they present for instruction, either as a general rule or at different seasons of the year; they cannot be made to conform to any course of instruction. In a medical ward, for instance, during what is known as the typhoid fever season, a nurse may obtain a better practical knowledge and experience in two months than in double the time at another period of the year. Almost invariably some one or two services are larger and more acute than the others. One hospital may provide an excellent service in general surgery, while, in another, gynæcology may be much the more important. Three months of medical training in one hospital often mean a totally different matter from three months of such training in another. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that the length of time devoted to each subject should be a matter of adjustment in a certain degree in each institution. Where a particular service is weak it is evident that a longer time is needed in order that the student may become efficient in that particular branch of work. As a rough working outline, subject to such modification and expansion as each hospital may find necessary, I would suggest:—Medical training, one year; surgical training, one year; obstetrics, three months; operating rooms, three months; total, two and a-half years.

If this term is added to a six months' preparatory training the three years is thus filled. Under the head of medical training may be included the nursing of all ordinary medical diseases, the infectious and contagious diseases, some nervous disorders, and the care of children.

The year devoted to surgical training should include the care of patients before and after all varieties of general surgical operations, of gynæcological operations, and also of patients suffering from orthopædic troubles. Approximately, the time devoted to each branch of surgical service would then be about six months. I repeat that this time allotment is suggestive only, and must be subject to such slight variations as the unequal services of different hospitals render necessary.

As to methods of teaching and training, stress has already been laid upon what seems to me to constitute the main feature of a proper system. Nursing involves the acquirement of two things—knowledge and technical skill. The skill is the art which is taught by one, the teacher, and acquired by the other, the pupil. It can be taught in one place only—the bedside. There is the true place for the teaching of nursing. There only can be taught the accurate observation which lets no faint shadow of change in a patient pass unnoticed;

the skilful handling, the sure touch which brings relief, comfort, and confidence; the thoughtful foresight which anticipates and provides for needs which cannot be expressed; the exact recording of facts and conditions which enables the physician to draw proper inferences and conclusions, and keeps him in command of the situation. These can never be taught anywhere but over the patient and under the eye, the constant personal supervision, and criticism of the teacher. No good nurse was ever made in a lecture room. Lectures have their place, but it is a minor one. They are necessary to cover in a systematic and comprehensive way a certain defined field of instruction. The causes of diseases, the symptoms which they present, the complications and difficulties which may arise, methods of treatment, and the reasons why one thing should be done and not another, form in a general way the subjects which should be handled in the lecture-room. The conference system—that is, the interchange of thought between teacher and students—should be used freely.

The apportionment of subjects for the different years, the grading, so that the student is carried forward from one subject to another in a systematic, orderly, and logical manner, is much more easily arranged in the theoretical instruction than in the practical. We cannot say that medical training should come first and gynæcological should follow; because all the patients must be nursed all the time, and each ward must have its quota of younger as well as of older students. In a general way it is advisable to give the solid grounding in the care of medical, surgical, and gynæcological patients during the first two years, leaving training in obstetrics, in operating-room procedure, in the care of the nervous, and some special subjects to the senior year. The course of lectures and classes should cover in a systematic and comprehensive way the entire field of nursing work, including such subjects as massage, the analysis of urine, and possibly some others.

By conference between schools, by constant comparison of methods and results, a definite outline of the essentials which must be taught concerning a given subject, and a definite time allotment necessary for the proper handling of that subject, can in time be reached. It may seem of small importance in the beginning whether a subject is taught in a series of six lectures, or in a series of classes accompanied by demonstrations occupying an hour twice weekly for six weeks; but three years hence it will make all the difference between a nurse who knows that subject and one who does not.

To go further into detail concerning any of the subjects mentioned would be to transgress still further the time limit set for this paper. I have not found myself able to adhere closely to the subject about which your Executive did me the honour to ask me to write. I can only suggest some ways

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