

"Three months in accident wards, where prompt skill is acquired in undressing patients admitted with fractures and burns, preparing fracture beds and splints, and dressing burns.

"I have not yet mentioned any of the special branches, such as ophthalmic and monthly nursing, massage, or the care of the delirious or temporarily insane; of the latter, all nurses have some experience in the medical and fever wards of Irish hospitals, due, possibly, to habits of intemperance and the excitable temperament of the people.

"During the months spent in the wards, the pupil should attend lectures in hygiene, anatomy, and physiology, also lectures on general and special nursing, including instruction in poisons, their antidotes, as well as the proper administration of drugs, their uses and effects.

"In the brief space of ten minutes, I find it impossible to mention all that occurs to my mind in connection with the training of nurses or the further education of those desiring to work as hospital Sisters or Matrons; but for the nurse our aim should be to keep the educational qualifications for State Registration well within workable limits of the candidates who present themselves for training to-day, and distinct from any appearance of vieing with the theoretical work of medical students, and to insist on a clear understanding of the subjects taught, and thorough proficiency and dexterity in the manual labour entailed in carrying out any treatment that may be ordered."

Miss MOLLETT (Southampton) thought a certain amount of theory was essential for nurses, not because it was desirable that they should have medical knowledge, but because it was necessary that they should know the principles underlying their work. She thought the great difficulty in teaching nurses arose from the very poor general education most women received. The difficulty of teaching them to think, to observe, was immense. Without the faculty of assimilation, all the lectures in the world were useless to them.

Miss MAUD BANFIELD (Philadelphia) said she had the unusual advantage of acquaintance with the English and American systems of training, and knew the difficulties and virtues of both. The scheme which Miss Nutting had described worked perfectly in her own school, but it was difficult, and in some cases impossible, for others to follow literally in her footsteps. At the Polyclinic and the Lakeside Hospitals, Philadelphia, the wards and the Nurses' Home were utilised as teaching ground. The probationers did the ward work, under the supervision of a specially-appointed instructor. They also were taught in the same way the care of the sick. The very sick were left to the care of the thoroughly trained, but one side of the ward was taken charge of by probationers, who were responsible to the instructor for their work, and she in her turn was responsible to the Head Nurse for its due performance. They worked in the wards for four hours a day, principally in the morning, but returning at four o'clock in the afternoon, to take temperatures, &c. They also worked in the dispensary and out-patient departments, and sterilised dressings; thus they helped, not hindered, the work of the wards. She thought Miss Nutting's paper perhaps sounded unnecessarily alarming to English ears. It was an American custom to call things by long names. To say that nurses were taught *Materia Medica* did not imply exhaustive knowledge, but it was of considerable use to them to know

doses, to know the effects of drugs, and the symptoms to be looked for—as, for instance, when a patient was taking mercury. All these things could be taught by an instructor on the lines described; the expense entailed was simply the expense of housing and maintaining an additional number of pupils, and the salary of the instructor. In view of the increased efficiency ensured, this small additional outlay was eminently worth while.

A point which she also mentioned was the increased happiness of the pupils. When the system was first started at the Polyclinic Hospital, there were two probationers about to be sent away as unsuitable. They were, instead, put back into the preliminary class in the charge of the instructor. The way they developed was marvellous. They took hold of the work, they developed keen intelligences, and were now most promising nurses. They had been swamped in the rush of a busy hospital.

Miss GOODRICH (New York) said she would like to point out that throughout Miss Nutting's paper continual emphasis was laid on the paramount importance of practical work, and that there was no instruction like that given at the bedside. The paper was the outcome of practical experience of a system which had been tried and found successful. It was noteworthy that, in connection with the system which Miss Banfield had explained, patients nursed before and after the system was inaugurated had asserted that the difference to their comfort in the methods of handling under the old system and under that in which the probationers received daily instruction was marvellous.

Miss MARY BURR (London) said that as a nurse she felt very strongly the need for definite, systematic teaching, perhaps because during her own training she had very little. It was not every Ward Sister who was a born teacher, or who could make what she herself knew clear and simple to others. She thought if the training-schools were to get the best results time must be apportioned for both practical and theoretical work. Nurses frequently went to their lectures at the end of the day, when they were fagged out mentally and physically, and were not in a condition to absorb knowledge. She must say that as a probationer the time she had for assimilating knowledge for herself, "in silence and solitude," was exceedingly limited.

Miss ROGERS (Leicester) said that Matrons knew to their sorrow the need of preliminary training, but she thought that the mothers of England should realise their responsibility to their girls. When some pupils entered the training-schools—and it was no uncommon thing—who did not even know when a kettle boiled, did not know that tow should not be put down the sink, it was impossible to teach them in a three years' professional training all the practical domestic details they ought to have learnt in their own homes.

Another point of interest brought forward by a member was that the three years in hospital was a preparation for future work. When the training-schools worked nurses for fourteen hours a day, they left them tired out at the end of their training, and ill-fitted to enter upon serious professional work. Further, with a fourteen hours' day it was impossible that they should have time for study.

Miss CLARA LEE (Kingston) said she thought probationers failed to get the greatest advantage from lectures because there was a long gap between the age

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)