

of eighteen, when they left school, and that of twenty-three, when they took up hospital work, and many had lost the habit of learning.

Miss STEWART thought that lack of general education was at the root of the trouble, but she was in favour of accepting probationers at an early age. The youngest at St. Bartholomew's Hospital was twenty-one.

Mrs. FENWICK said that before proposing a resolution she desired to put on record how heartily she agreed with every word of Miss Nutting's splendid paper, and the educational course which she advocated. The scheme, perhaps, sounded more difficult than it really was in its practical application. She had the pleasure of visiting the Johns Hopkins Hospital in 1901, and had seen the system advocated, in practice; there was nothing attempted that could not be carried out by any well-organised training-school for nurses, although she was inclined to think that much of the preliminary training of a nurse could be given in central schools, and so relieve the hospitals of the expense.

RESOLUTION.

Mrs. Fenwick then invited Miss Isla Stewart to take the chair whilst she proposed the following resolution:—

Whereas, The disorder existing to-day in nursing conditions is due chiefly to inequalities of training and differing educational standards; and

Whereas, The serious and responsible work of a nurse demands not only excellent moral qualities, but also the trained intelligence and cultured mind of the well-educated woman; and

Whereas, The principle of Registration by the State is now generally conceded as safeguarding the public health, and as promoting a more thorough education of nurses; now therefore be it

Resolved: That every person assuming the position of a Trained Nurse should give proof of the following minimum preparation for such work:—

(a) A good general education.

(b) A preliminary course in domestic science, elementary anatomy, physiology, bacteriology, materia medica, and technical preparation for ward work.

(c) Three complete years of practical work in hospital wards under qualified instructors.

And be it further

Resolved: That this minimum preparation should be examined and registered by the State; and, lastly, be it

Resolved: That it is the duty of the Training Schools to certify to the qualities of character and moral fitness of candidates for Registration.

Mrs. FENWICK said the resolution incorporated the principle that before a pupil nurse undertook the practical care of the sick she should prove herself to be suitable mentally, morally, and physically, and be worth training. It was quite ridiculous to argue that a woman totally ignorant of the elements of domestic

science, and the underlying principles of hygiene, was better qualified to undertake the care of the sick in hospital wards than the woman who had learnt the elements of those sciences, and given practical evidence of her knowledge. A sound general education and preliminary training in the six preliminaries specified in the resolution were now necessary to give a probationer a fair chance of benefiting by a course of three years' practical work in the wards.

In advocating any adequate scheme of nursing education, the question of cost could not be ignored. In this connection parents must be encouraged to realise their responsibilities to the female child. Fathers made every effort to fit their sons for the battle of life, but usually lived in hope of some other man coming along to provide for their daughters. This was unjust and demoralising. Preliminary schools might be organised in connection with the Universities in certain centres, and they would certainly be utilised if it was found that totally immature material would not be accepted for training in the nursing schools.

During the three years' practical work in the wards, systematic instruction should be provided by qualified teachers, and power of imparting instruction should be one of the indispensable qualifications of Sisters of wards. In the attainment of our earnest desire for better and more systematic nursing education, State Registration would be the great lever. Until it was in force, there could never be any reliable test of a training-school's standards, and they would remain as they were to-day, an unknown quantity. Until we obtained Registration, there would never be any satisfactory system of education or discipline for the profession as a whole.

Autocratic coteries in the nursing world should be broken up. No doubt a future generation of Matrons would take an active part in the education and examination of nurses; and as under any practical system of Registration they would have the same opportunity of testifying to the qualities of character and moral fitness of candidates as they have at present before certificates are awarded, there would be no justification for the absurd statement that "you can't register character." She begged to propose the resolution which she had read to the meeting.

Miss L. L. DOCK said she had much pleasure in seconding the resolution, and would have been glad to do so had it been of a far more stringent character. She was of opinion that it was time that the training-schools realised their educational responsibilities. During the Conference considerable emphasis had been laid on the defects of early training. The effect of an adequate system of Registration for nurses would be to improve methods of general education. A striking instance of this had already been brought to the notice of the Nurse Board of Examiners in the State of New York. The Regents of the University in New York State found that the requirements of the nurse-training schools as to preliminary education were improving the domestic economy standards. That was a very striking result in so short a time. The resolution, if passed, would not carry compulsion, but the decisions of the Council had considerable weight and influence, and for that reason she would have supported it, if it had set a more difficult standard. In order to attain the best possible, it was often necessary to attempt the impossible. She considered the resolution very reasonable, and that it would have a most salutary effect, and had great pleasure in seconding it.

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