

St. Vincent de Paul, and I saw their side of the question.

I am perfectly ready to acknowledge that nursing in these days is a progressive profession—the nun is not a progressive woman. I am also ready to acknowledge that nuns can be stupid, lazy, hard and unconscientious, just like any other human beings, and that for many reasons the French Government has been justified in throwing off their power and getting rid of them; but, after all, these people cannot see themselves as others see them. What they see is that they have given up their liberty and taken vows to die to the world, and given up their lives in the service of God, and that they are being persecuted as our Saviour told them they would be; and we all know what perfectly beautiful, unselfish lives some of them lead, and after all there is this undeniable fact, and that is that the patients love them, and regret them when they are turned out.

I could perfectly imagine how bitter it must have been for these Sisters, who had given their lives for this hospital, being compelled by the law to have amongst them not only lay nurses, Protestant and Catholic, but foreign surveillantes and young surveillantes of two years' training from the Protestant hospital, and, worst of all, nuns of a different order.

If things had been left to themselves this school must have died through its inherent weakness and childish organisation, but the clerical party, the patients, servants, and even the doctors and students set to work to overthrow it. They stopped at nothing; the lowest, the meanest, the most unmanly and undignified tricks were employed and resorted to. Disgraceful, coarse, immoral articles were put in the papers throwing mud on the young surveillantes, and yet these girls bore it all bravely, and fought on bravely in the very face of defeat, until defeat came and they all had to leave, leaving the sceptre in the hands of the Lady Superior. Still, it all brought good to the nuns and to the nurses; they each fought for what they thought was good and right; they were each humbled in their turn, and they each taught each other lessons.

I think the nuns must have seen that their nursing system and their stagnant life and ways needed reforming and progressing, whilst the young inexperienced *cheftaines* from the little Protestant hospital had an insight into the life and workings of big hospitals; they saw a larger number of cases, and learnt other methods and ways. It must have developed and strengthened them, and enabled them to be better qualified to work at the nursing reform movement. Miss Elston also acquired a good deal of experience, and was better able to grasp the complexity of French difficulties where politics, religion, and social customs stand in the way of nursing reform.

I, too, learnt many things, and the three months I spent in the Protestant Hospital at Bordeaux were both interesting and instructive.

Dr. Hamilton looked upon the hospital as a training-school, and her organisation certainly responded far more to one's ideas as to what constitutes a training-school. Unfortunately, the number of beds and the average number of patients was too small to give the pupils sufficient experience, but the great advantage they had in Dr. Hamilton as directrice and teacher (apart from the lectures given by the doctors), and the systematic way she passed them from one branch of nursing to another, and the fact of there being a maternity department, are facts worthy of notice. Perhaps I can now more clearly illustrate the two principles I have fought for for years.

1. A fully-trained nurse means one who has been trained in *every* branch of nursing.

2. Those who are to become Matrons and Sisters ought to pass higher examinations than those who wish to be simple working nurses. In other words, those who wish to occupy the higher posts ought to make themselves eligible by qualifying themselves for those higher and more responsible posts. They ought to prove their superior mental qualities by passing superior examinations.

I am ready to acknowledge that a good practical nurse, who can make a light hot poultice, cook dainties, and keep her ward spotlessly clean, is a very valuable woman, or even a priceless woman—in her place; but those who are to occupy posts as Matrons or Sisters require more organising and intellectual qualities, and the very fact of their having passed stiffer examinations will give them a position amongst the nurses and committee.

This is what I have always meant by two standards of examinations—*intellectual* aristocracy and superiority, and *not* social. In fact, only the other day the member of a hospital committee told me that there ought to be some guide and some criterion to help them to choose a Matron from amongst the hundreds of applications sent in, frequently from absolutely ineligible candidates. As he put it in his own way, "there ought to be No. 1 and No. 2 nurses, those who qualify themselves for the higher posts and those who don't."

I am certainly for State Registration, and if I thought that my shilling and my name would help the cause on I would gladly throw them in; but the most important point to me in this question is putting order into our profession, defining what constitutes a "fully-trained nurse," and compelling a stated standard, compelling also those in charge of nurses to *train* them, and the prevention of each hospital being a law unto itself. Nurses should be under the law and protected by the law just as much as doctors and chemists.

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