

## The Revolution in French Hospitals.

By Miss LAVINIA L. DOCK.

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So it came about that, although the physicians had from the first demanded rotation in the wards for the pupils, they have never been able to get it. They complain, too, that the nurses are often removed from one hospital to another, breaking off their studies and thus discouraging them.

Dr. Bourneville, in one of his reports, speaks of an apparent injustice in the fact that nurses appointed to the higher posts of head nurse or supervisor were not always those who had taken the course of study. But as the amphitheatre attendants and other employees not directly concerned with nursing are also admitted to the study course, it is evident that it cannot be assumed that those who had had it were the best practical nurses. They might, indeed, be elevator men or book-keepers and not nurses at all.

In spite of all difficulties progress has been made, the grade of applicant has improved, and a larger number have had a primary education. Moreover, every year a larger number take the hospital course. In 1900, according to Dr. Bourneville, fifty-two passed the examinations. The course consists of seven lessons in ward management and hospital records and account keeping, six each in anatomy and physiology, twelve in hygiene, eighteen in minor surgery, ten in the uses of drugs, four in obstetrics. A manual of nursing is used as a reading lesson, with explanations. Every year lectures are given by specialists, and a set of leaflets dealing with special points is published, and these are at the service of the nurses. Practical exercises, he reported, were conducted every day, in surgical and medical wards alternately, under the direction of the "surveillantes," or supervising nurses (who, however, themselves may be only "experienced" nurses without teaching). The exercises consist of the care of instruments, management of dressings, and handling of drugs. The pupils are taught to apply dressings, blisters, &c., take temperature, pulse, and respiration, to vaccinate, give hypodermic and other injections, irrigations, &c. The professional "cupper" of each hospital teaches them to cup; the bath attendants teach them to give baths, douches, &c.; "sage-femme," or midwife, teaches the women how to examine and how to do up a parturient patient. A manikin is used for bandaging, and, as each course is finished, the pupils are required to write several essays upon what they have learned. An examination is then set, with a minimum to pass.

Dr. Bourneville in the report above mentioned enumerated the points in which improvement was necessary to make the service what it should be. Better rooms for the nurses are urgently needed.

At present they are badly housed. Their food is not good, and the men's summer uniform should be different. Night duty needs improvement. At present it is often necessary to put probationers on night duty. Each school needs a small amphitheatre class-room, a sitting-room, a nurses' library, and specimen room. Then promotion should take place in a just and orderly way. The higher posts should only be given to those holding the hospital diploma, and the salaries should rise with length of service.

Further, he recommended that vacation houses should be maintained for the nurses, or else that they should have paid vacations. He advised the establishment of training-schools in every town, and urged that the possession of a diploma be made as obligatory for the nurse as for the teacher. After his report was read he asked for a resolution. The various speakers warmly endorsed his points. Dr. Berthod said that physicians could not get good results with dirty and ignorant nurses. They had to be clean, and they ought to be lodged comfortably. Moreover, they could not study when they were over-tired with work. The pay should be better, the work made more dignified, the housing should be better, and the moral tone raised. This, he said, had been done in the Lyon hospital.

The president of the meeting remarked that he had once thought devotion was sufficient, but now he believed in training. The school in Lyon was open to lay women and to "religieuses." Dr. Bourneville said this was also the case in Paris, but the sisters would not come. Resolutions were finally passed endorsing Dr. Bourneville's recommendations.

Again, the situation has its pathos, as one regards all these learned—and not only learned, but cultured and most courteous—men, striving in scholarly and conscientious fashion to educate and train their hundreds of nurses. The ridiculous side is also again discernible. Dr. Hamilton scores them all right roundly for not putting trained Matrons or women principals in charge, criticises unsparingly the scientific theory which they present to these pupils, in whose entire hospital sojourn all that we include in the term "practical training" is so lamentably absent, and declares that examinations at which she has been present, when scientific men examined pupils in *nursing*, which they knew nothing about, would move one alternately to tears and laughter.

I went through some of the great hospitals in Paris, and I must confess, while feeling every sympathy with the efforts made and every wish to judge justly, that the impression made was most painful. For one thing, the general aspect of the wards is one of cheerless, military, and unhomelike bareness. This is in the older hospitals. Two beautiful smaller hospitals are exceptions to this—viz., the Broca and the Boucicaut.

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