

same to-day as they have been for the last two centuries.

In the eighteenth century a first attempt was made to form the staff at the General Hospital (Salpêtrière) which was recruited from young girls or widows either retired from the world or without fortune. The regulations were remarkable, and still deserve to be consulted. The staff was directed by a Superior, under the direction of a Hospital Bureau, composed chiefly of Members of Parliament. Under the "Officières" were placed "filles de service," and another class called "filles de malades" worked more especially among the sick.

The difficulties of finding recruits for the Institution at first was soon succeeded by another difficulty, which became an abuse. The persons applying were too many. The profession—if at that epoch it can be called a profession—became a refuge for the unfortunate both physically and morally.

During the first half of the nineteenth century—from 1802 to 1849—no one knew how to remedy this abuse. It was once thought of replacing these paid servants by orphans from the "Hospices," but this project was abandoned, and in 1836 we find a new organisation of the Officières, Superintendents, and servants; they were divided into eight classes, with wages gradually rising according to their class. It appears that this reform produced little effect. The complaints of the medical officers of the untrustworthiness and incapacity of these people were many, and the religious bodies who had the superintendence of the Hospital, appear to have made no attempts to instruct or to improve them in morals.

In 1845 a more serious attempt was made. A resolution settled the conditions of admission of the employés, which had hitherto been left to the discretion of the Superiors and directors of the Hospital. Old age premiums were also awarded, and pensions and almshouses given to those past work. Unfortunately the funds failed, and the reform resolved on was of little avail.

The law of 1849, which is still in force in the Assistance Publique of Paris, gave to a responsible director alone the management of the interests of the hospitals. This new organisation had an immediate effect on the "personnel" of the hospitals. A general *repertoire* was established, where the antecedents of each worker were pigeon-holed. Her moral value, zeal, and aptitude for her work were noted. It was now possible to follow each one's work, and by degrees to establish a general purification.

Nevertheless, the evils so frequently demonstrated still persisted; this staff, without professional education, without special aptitude, manifested still the same faults—insubordination, instability, immorality. The necessity for reorganisation was put before the Vigilance Committee with reference to the budget of 1861, and fresh regulations were enforced which control the recruiting and salary, the general organisation of the *surveillantes*, *sous-surveillantes*, *suppléantes* (sisters, staff nurses, probationers), nurses, and night nurses, etc. It also organised the system of premiums, rewards of merit, and prizes, a system now nearly at an end on account of the higher salaries given.

The classifications adopted in 1861 were modified, even complicated, during the following 20 years by a series of reforms which had for their object the improvement of the status of the lay staff. The Municipal Council of Paris, after having repaired the disasters of the war of 1870, took in hand the reorganisation of the whole Municipal Service. The Assistance Publique was the object of its most active work. A group of Progressives, chief among whom was Doctor Bourneville, understood that the real reform needed was in instruction and education, and moral tone, and the first "Schools of Infirmières" were founded in 1878 at Salpêtrière and at Bicêtre, and later at La Pitié and Lariboisière.

The question of professional training of Infirmières was thus first raised in Paris, and gradually universally. The public institutions, like the private ones, understand its importance and its necessity. This Congress itself is a most brilliant proof of this feeling.

The Assistance Publique of Paris, since the year 1880 has (although insufficient since expenditure is limited), established for the last twenty-five years a nucleus of *élite* superintendents and infirmières, whom you will appreciate if you visit our hospitals. It has continued to work for the betterment of the status of the staff, the recruiting of which grows more and more difficult, and though more difficult, is not always any the better. A recent regulation, dating from 1903, raised the scale of all wages, limited the working day to 12 hours, meals included, gave holidays of 21 to 25 days a year, gratuitous medical attendance, payment of wages before and after accouchements, and for men during military service. Workers attacked with tuberculosis may receive a salary for nearly three years, and we have for our Infirmières a Convalescent Home and a Sanatorium; lastly, an honourable refuge is assured to all.

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