

Nutting, President of the American Federation of Nurses, said that the practical training of a nurse was the most important part of her work. To be efficient it must be founded on theoretical knowledge, but nothing could take the place of practical experience, and a constantly rising standard was required of nurses in order to satisfy the requirement of a constantly rising perfection of medical science. In the United Kingdom, the United States, and Germany the standards for nurses had greatly improved of recent years, but even now they were in a transition state.

A most important department of nurse-training was the preparatory school. Thirty years ago such training was unobtainable, and there was little practical teaching in the wards. In the United Kingdom the Glasgow Royal Infirmary was the first to institute a preliminary training school. Then the London Hospital. In the United States excellent courses had been instituted in this particular branch. Miss M. A. Nutting, President of the American Federation of Nurses, would tell the Conference something of the Preliminary School at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, where the system had proved a great success. Whether or no preliminary training was eventually arranged through small schools attached to hospitals or through central schools the fundamental principal was this: preliminary instruction was essential before a probationer entered the wards for training.

A HOSPITAL PREPARATORY COURSE FOR NURSES.

By Miss M. A. NUTTING.

Miss Nutting said that the important point about a preparatory course was not that the teaching given in connection with it was new, but that, instead of being distributed throughout the course of training, certain subjects were gathered up and systematised and placed in their proper place at the beginning. The pupil was taught how to swim before jumping in. She considered that the teaching of nurses should be carried out in independent schools and colleges, independently endowed, working in connection with hospitals, which supplied the necessary training ground. The question was a difficult, delicate, and complicated one, but she thought these the right lines. A preparatory course was an essential department in the organisation of a nursing curriculum. Some hospitals had the means of establishing such courses independently, but for the majority co-operation with a central school was probably the best plan. Miss Nutting emphasised the fact that Nursing Schools should be educational establishments, founded on an independent basis, instead of in connection with charitable institutions. In organising along experimental lines, mistakes might be made, but "the man who never makes a mistake, never makes anything."

THE TRAINING OF THE NURSE IN THE WARDS, AND THE POSITION AND DUTIES OF THE MATRON.

By Miss ISLA STEWART.

Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London.

Before beginning to read her paper, Miss Stewart said that it must be realised that the pivot of success in any training school was the Matron. She was sometimes a much abused person, but it was quite impossible to get on without her. Where there was a good Matron at the head of a nursing department, there the nursing was satisfactory.

Miss Stewart stated that in her opinion the practical ward work is the most important part of a probationer's training, whilst not undervaluing theoretical training, which increases the probationer's intelligence and capacity; yet it is the hourly practical work in the wards which makes the nurse.

The probationers of twenty years ago taught themselves at the expense of their patients. The three years' training of to-day is carried out efficiently and systematically without detriment or discomfort to the patient. To do this, the Sister must be a fully trained nurse, able to teach and train the nurses under her. The probationer should be the best possible, with good health, a sane, intelligent mind, good education, good manners, and deft, clever hands. To render efficient help to doctors and surgeons the nurse must be trained carefully, minutely, and systematically. She must be taught the importance of detail, the minute care necessary for surgical cleanliness, careful observation, accurate obedience, and absolute punctuality. This is done by never overlooking a fault, and by gradually increasing responsibility until she is able to bear the enormous responsibility which comes to all nurses.

The duties of a Matron were also numerous. First, there was the cleanliness of the entire hospital. Secondly, the linen. Thirdly, the correspondence. Where the Matron cannot do all these herself, she must see that they are efficiently performed, and check all waste. The training school is one of the most arduous parts of her duties, and must be supervised and organised by herself. The supervision of the nurses is a most interesting and responsible part of her work. She must choose and reject them; arrange their work; make and enforce rules. All this entails much work and worry, and keeps her fully occupied. Her first duty is to the hospital, that its work is well done, and without waste. Her aim should be to develop her nurses, to put them on the right path, so that the output may comprise many good women, a few great women, and as few failures as possible. She should be an expert nurse, knowing the trials and temptations of her life, having good health, good education, self-reliance, and be trained to teach, possess a strong will, sound judgment, a sense of justice, and be ready to acknowledge and rectify her mistakes.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)