

workhouses which the infirmaries serve have populations as big as that of many a small town, there is always a great deal of acute work, both medical and surgical, whilst children's diseases have invariably a large number of beds allotted to them.

The probationers in the training schools, of which no less than 62 are recognised by the Local Government Board, have, therefore, great opportunities for learning practical work. The theory, as you know, is not neglected, the Medical Superintendent and his subordinates, the Matron and her assistants, all taking a recognised and definite share in class teaching; whilst the examinations at the end of the three years' course, being invariably held by an outside examiner, are very fair tests of a nurse's knowledge.

As we have seen, prejudices die hard, and we cannot disguise the fact that to some extent Poor Law Nursing has hitherto been the Cinderella of the State Nursing Services. Infirmatory nurses have not, as a rule, been successful in obtaining the higher positions, even under the Local Government Board, and they have long laboured under an undeserved disadvantage when in competition with their hospital-trained sisters.

Seeing that the Infirmaries are the *State Hospitals*, such a state of affairs is anomalous, to say the least, and I believe that the State Registration of those nurses who have graduated in a recognised training school, and have passed a State-held examination, would do much to remedy our grievances.

The Bill promoted by the State Registration Society is careful to include infirmatory-trained nurses within its scope, and to put them on the same footing as those from the hospitals, the only difference being that a greater number of beds are necessary in an infirmatory training school than in a general hospital, and this is a wise proviso when one considers the larger proportion in the former of chronic cases.

All nurses who, at the passing of the Act, hold certificates from a training school recognised as such by the Local Government Board, will be eligible for the Register on payment of a fee, and *without* further examination; those who are still probationers when the Act comes into force will find that they must, before Registration at the end of their three years' training, pass an examination held under the auspices of a Nursing Board or Council, and in which no distinction will be made between different training schools, whether they be of the hospital or infirmatory type. And now let me shortly attempt to answer some of your questions.

1. What will be the advantage of Registration?

Registration should prove the great distinguishing mark between the qualified and unqualified nurse. It will not bring about the Millennium, but it will help to give the Infirmatory Nurse her proper position, and to prove that her training has fitted her to take her place among her hospital sisters.

It will ensure to the public a certain minimum amount of experience and knowledge in a nurse engaged, perhaps, in an emergency, when there is not enough time to follow up inquiries and credentials.

It will prevent the sending out of bogus nurses by institutions greedy of profit, and ensure that only genuine nurses, properly trained, be employed and described as such.

2. What about those nurses who have been working for a great number of years, but do not hold a certificate, such documents not being known at the time of their training?

The interests of such nurses are fully safeguarded in the Bill. If they can produce satisfactory evidence that they have received some training, and have, in addition, been working for three years at the passing of the Act, their names will be placed upon the Register in precisely the same manner as though they possessed recognised certificates.

3. What about Workhouse Nursing?

This will remain much the same as at present. In a workhouse, where there are a sufficient number of sick to necessitate the employment of three or more nurses, the Local Government Board at present require the guardians to provide one Superintendent Nurse (whose qualifications would entitle her to be on the Register) and two or more assistants, who must have had some training, usually a year in a small hospital or infirmatory. These assistants would not be "Registered Nurses" under the Act, and could not so describe themselves under a penalty, but as nurse attendants they would occupy the same position and be drawn from the same sources as at present.

I must further add that no penalty will be incurred by any unregistered person nursing the sick without a certificate, and it is not the desire of the promoters of the Bill to interfere in any way with any unregistered persons gaining their living by so doing, provided they abstain from attempting to palm themselves off as fully-trained, expert, and, therefore, Registered, nurses.

Yours very truly

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