

Training Nurses in Germany.*

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On the 1st of June, 1907, an administrative Act came into force in Prussia, of the highest importance for our profession. The Prussian Board of Instruction, in connection with the War Office, had issued examination regulations for nurses, which were passed by the Federal Council of Germany. After a year's training at a hospital recognised by the State such persons can be examined by a Government Commission of three doctors, one of whom must be a commissioned doctor and another a teacher at a nurses' training school. The examination lasts three days and is carried on theoretically and practically at the bedside in hospitals especially appointed for the purpose. For three days one patient is entrusted to the probationer, who has to undertake the care of him and to give an exact account of his condition. One night's duty is prescribed, after which 8 hours of rest are allowed. A practical examination of 1—2 hours is appointed for the second day. After the written report about the patient, on the third day, a final examination takes place.

After the examination a statement is given, in which either "very good" (1), "good" (2), "fair" (3), "unsatisfactory" (4), or "bad" (5) may occur. Having passed the examination, the probationer receives a certificate proving her or him to be a nurse acknowledged by the State.

In the certificate it is declared that the person in question "possesses the qualities necessary for the nursing profession," and contains the conditional clause:—"In case facts become known which are a proof that such qualities necessary for the nursing profession are wanting, or that the nurse persistently acts contrary to the regulations issued under Government supervision, the *withdrawal* of the Registration may occur."

The examination fee in Prussia amounts to 24 marks, and to the hospital in question a corresponding sum must be paid for board—in Berlin, 4 marks a day, consequently 12 marks.

To foreign countries it will be a matter of surprise that the Minister of War should have taken part in this administrative Act. It may be explained by the fact that in the German army the hospital provision is in a highly perfected condition, and also by the wish to give the training of the sanitary corps a definitely settled form.

The Medical Department of the Board of Instruction naturally corresponded to this wish relating to all persons engaged in nursing, but during the formation of the decree the Department, as a sub-division of the Ministry, proved to be at a disadvantage. For many years the training of the sanitary corps had lasted one year, and as such appeared to be quite sufficient. The training of the other nursing staffs was quite arbitrary. In a great number of town hospitals, as well as in the eight seminaries of the Diakonie-Verein, which are also started in town hospitals, the course of training lasted one year.

In the Red Cross Mother Houses, as well as for the St. John's Sisters, who were trained in deaconess houses, six months was to be the period of the training course; but the latter was often suspended and not made up because of lack of nurses; the Sisters were often required to take up work at attached smaller hospitals or in families before their period of training was accomplished.

In all other institutions there was an absolute lack of rule; in many houses theoretical instruction was often excellent, but just as often quite inadequate; for often, when excellent, it was quite one-sided.

It would occur that a probationer was sent into the operating room or to one ward, and was never given any different kind of work; thus in the one limited branch of her profession she would attain high perfection, but was quite helpless when, after some years, the force of circumstances imposed other work on her. Ambulance courses of six weeks' duration, four hours a week of theoretical instruction, and *no* practical teaching at the bedside was considered by many to be training!

Compared to such a state of things, one year's training according to a fixed plan of instruction could naturally be regarded as a step gained.

Under this view the proposal by the Medical Department of the Board of Instruction to have at least two years' training appointed was declined, and the more than 40,000 women nurses of Germany must be satisfied with the one year, which fully suffices for about 5,000 orderlies. In the plan of instruction the sanitary corps had also been so much considered that the nursing of infants and of lying-in women consequently was missing.

The former has now been added, while the nursing of lying-in women, which is so important a branch because of the high degree of mortality, is altogether missing.

As an educational basis the elementary school is considered to be sufficient. It is only

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