

lectures by professors for first and second year pupils, with exhaustive repetitions and demonstration lesson by the Matron, to be followed by serious examinations and the conferring of diplomas, as should be the case.

Correctly speaking, therefore, these Cliniques cannot be looked on as a complete training school for nurses, and the scheme which is to take active form in February aims at embodying all that is good in Rome and Naples, offering to pupils the thoroughness of instruction of the Blue Cross Nurses of Naples and the improved conditions of the Clinical nurses in Rome.

A small committee of ladies and Professor Raffaele Bastianelli have, with the help of Queen Elena and the Ministry, arranged for the opening of a nurses' home within the precincts of the Polyclinic Hospital. In this home, *which will be the first in Italy*, the Matron, head nurses, and pupils will live.

The entire nursing care of a surgical and medical block—144 beds—will be given over to this staff by the hospital authorities. The nuns will be retained for economic, administrative, and devotional functions.

As the question of employing lay or religious nurses is one of supremest importance in Latin countries, I wish to touch more in detail on this point. It is my belief that the only way to deal with it successfully is to face it openly.

In the article above-mentioned, Signora Celli stated that of 1,241 hospitals in 1902 only 429 had an entirely lay staff; 696 had a mixed staff of nuns and servant-nurses; and 112 were nursed exclusively by members of religious Orders. She added that during the preceding fifteen years the religious element had increased 10 per cent. Leaving all personal opinions entirely aside, such facts seem to prove the folly of even contemplating a general laicisation of Italian hospitals, whilst my experience of some fifteen years convinces me that should it be possible it would be the greatest of disasters. For, without going into psychological and racial considerations, it cannot be denied that hitherto a large proportion of altruism has been absorbed by the religious Orders, and in consequence it would need a generation or two to produce in sufficient numbers women who would devote themselves, their strength, intelligence, and feeling to the service of the sick without any impulse given by religious belief.

Should, therefore, the seemingly impossible happen, and Italy exact the suppression of religious nursing Orders in public hospitals, we should undoubtedly find ourselves deprived of the very element we most desire for pupil nurses, since the odium attaching to those who replaced the Sisters would cause even the most liberal Catholics to hesitate before casting in their lot in a camp which would be designated "Atheistic" and "Freemasonic." The question would inevitably fall into the domain of politico-religious conflict, and the cause of nursing would be grievously damaged or delayed.

We would, therefore, proclaim from the beginning our desire that the nursing question should remain entirely outside all political or religious

parties. That our object is solely that of helping to provide what modern science recognises as needful in nursing patients, either in or out of hospital—in other words, the formation of the competent trained nurse.

Whether she be nun or secular should be a question of individual choice with private patients and of the majority in public hospitals. Briefly, nursing, like medicine, should be recognised as a non-confessional profession.

The variety of opinions, however, expressed by our medical men within the last few years, leaves me in the dark as to the consensus of opinion that prevails amongst the faculty. But not so with the patients; there the Sisters undoubtedly obtain the large majority of the Southern, if not the Northern, vote. The conclusion to which I come is, therefore, that hospitals in those towns desirous of bringing nursing up to date should start training schools on one of the following lines:—

(a) Hospitals which open training schools to lay and religious pupils.

(b) Hospitals which confine the nursing entirely to a lay staff, retaining the Sisters only for economic and spiritual departments (as is successfully done in America and Ireland).

In each type of hospital the standard of nursing to be identical, and eventually to receive Government recognition.

In those of type (a) the nuns and lay pupils would frequent the same two years' courses of lectures, adopt the same modern systemisation of ward work, and pass the same examination to obtain the same diploma.

After two years from the opening of these training schools only those nurses who gained the diploma, whether nuns or lay, would be eligible for the posts of head nurses.

In both types of hospital the present staff of servant-nurses would cease to exist. Those who possessed sufficient education and aptitude for the higher training would enter as pupil nurses of the new school. The others would compete for places as ward-maids.

In this way all dislocation of work would be avoided, also the stigma of "illiberality" in turning away any who wished to work truly and enlightenedly would not be incurred.

The Polyclinical Training School for Professional Nurses, which is announced for February of next year, will be based on type (b); the nuns taking no active part in the nursing, the entire responsibility of which will be confided to the staff of trained nurses and their pupils.

In the commencement, the trained staff cannot be exclusively Italian. The Matron and Sisters must all be women who possess the highest perfection of training and wide hospital experience. They will, therefore—with some of the Staff Nurses—be Anglo-Saxon, French, or German, women possessing the true pioneer spirit and a sufficient knowledge of Italian.

All the pupils, however, and the majority of the staff nurses, will be Italians. The latter will, as they become capable, gradually replace the foreign element.

Queen Elena and the Prime Minister are giving

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