

## The Education of Poor Law Nurses.

The Guardians of the Poor of the parish of Fulham are circularising the Guardians of other Metropolitan unions and parishes, inviting their consideration and approval of the subjoined scheme for the training and examination of probationer nurses prior to its being submitted to the Local Government Board for sanction.

### PROPOSED RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE TRAINING AND EXAMINATION OF PROBATIONER NURSES IN METROPOLITAN INFIRMARIES.

(1) Candidates for the post of probationer must be at least 21 years of age and must produce certificates that they are of good character and health and have received a fair general education. They should be selected and recommended for appointment by the Medical Superintendent and Matron of the Training School (if possible, after a personal interview with the Matron), and should serve for a trial period of at least two or three months before being permanently appointed.

(2) The training shall extend over a period of at least three years during which the probationer will be required to attend courses of lectures on elementary anatomy, physiology, medical and surgical nursing and cookery for the sick, such lectures being arranged by the Boards of Guardians at their respective training schools. All lectures shall be given by the Infirmiry staff (except cooking) without any additional expense being incurred by the Guardians.

(3) Probationers will be required to pass the examination held by the Examining Board. This examination may be taken at any time after the end of the probationer's second year, and will consist of a paper and a *viva voce* examination on the subjects mentioned in paragraph 2, except cookery for the sick. Candidates for the examination must produce certificates signed by the Medical Superintendent and Matron of their Training School, that their conduct and ward work have been satisfactory, and that they have attended courses of instruction in the subjects mentioned in paragraph 2.

(4) The Examining Board shall consist of three Infirmiry Medical Superintendents, three Infirmiry Matrons, and four other persons (two of whom shall be medical men and two of whom may be women). The Medical Superintendents and Matrons shall have had at least five years' experience as such at a London Poor Law Infirmiry, and shall hold office for two years. The Examining Board shall be appointed by a Committee to be constituted by one member from each Board of Guardians co-operating in the scheme.

(5) The examinations shall be held at convenient times during the year, such times to be arranged by the examining authorities. The written examination will be held at the individual training school, the authorities of which will be responsible for the supervision of candidates. The oral and practical examinations will be held at convenient centres.

(6) The papers and subject matter of the *viva voce* and practical examinations shall be set by the Board of Examiners. The papers shall be marked by the medical members of the Board. The practical and oral examination shall be marked by the medical members and matrons in consultation.

(7) Successful candidates shall be arranged in two classes. The Board of Examiners shall fix the percentage of marks qualifying for a pass of each class.

(8) Successful candidates who have completed three years' training shall be awarded certificates. Each certificate shall state:

(i.) That the candidate has received three years' training, with theoretical and practical instruction, at some specified London Poor Law Infirmiry.

(ii.) That her work during those three years has been "Excellent," "Very Good," "Good," or "Satisfactory."

(iii.) That her conduct during those three years has been "Excellent," "Very Good," "Good," or "Satisfactory."

(iv.) That she has passed an examination in the principles and practice of nursing in the first or second class.

This certificate will be signed by:—

The Chairman of the Examining Board.

The Authorities of the training school in which she received her training.

(9) Each Board of Guardians shall pay a fee of 10s. 6d. for each probationer sent up for examination or re-examination from its training school.

In relation to this scheme we may point out that while it affords satisfactory evidence of the widespread desire for greater uniformity of training and teaching for nurses, the curriculum of theoretical instruction is scarcely sufficiently comprehensive, as no curriculum for nurses can be adequate which does not include instruction in such essential subjects as hygiene and materia medica. Presumably bacteriology is included in the lectures on surgical nursing.

Further, we are of opinion that the interests of the Poor Law Infirmiry Training Schools (and of the nurses) will be best served by claiming for them the position which is rightfully theirs of general training schools. There is already a tendency to differentiate between hospital and infirmiry training schools for nurses, and anything which tends to emphasise this is to be deprecated. In our view, the best method of obliterating the line of demarcation between the two would be by establishing one examination for both under State Authority.

There is every indication that nursing education must be put on a satisfactory basis, a standard be defined, and the knowledge of nurses tested by a central examination if efficiency is to be secured. The public safety demands this guarantee.

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