

Nursing in America and State Registration.

On Friday evening, July 21st, an audience of English nurses had the privilege of listening to an Address on Nursing in America and State Registration from Dr. Winford H. Smith, Superintendent of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, U.S.A.

Miss E. S. Rundle, Isla Stewart Scholar at Teachers' College, Columbia University, and a pupil there of the Lecturer, was in the Chair, and was supported by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Mrs. Winford Smith, and Miss Cox-Davies, Matron of the Royal Free Hospital. Before opening the meeting, the Chairman asked Mrs. Winford Smith's acceptance of a few flowers—English flowers—and presented her with a beautiful bouquet of pink carnations and asparagus fern tied with ribbons of a harmonious tint.

In introducing the lecturer, Miss Rundle said that it was her good fortune to know him in New York when Superintendent of the great Bellevue and Allied Hospitals. Lately, when another great hospital, the Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, was seeking to find the best man obtainable to succeed Dr. Hurd as Superintendent, its choice fell on Dr. Winford Smith.

At Teachers' College, Dr. Smith had lectured on hospital administration, and she had made bold to ask him when he spent one short week in London if he would speak to English nurses, and he was here in fulfilment of his promise to do so.

THE ADDRESS.

Dr. Smith said in part: It is a very great pleasure to have an opportunity of speaking to English nurses. You and your sisters in America have much in common. You have high ideals—the same ideals—and you believe in high standards of nursing which are higher in England and America than in any other country, a fact upon which you are to be congratulated.

Referring to the establishment of the first nurse training school in America at Bellevue Hospital, a little over a quarter of a century ago, the lecturer said it was established on remarkably sound lines. The report of the Committee appointed at that time makes very interesting reading, a very far-sighted policy was adopted, and the report in recommending the establishment of a College for the training of nurses, sounded the educational note, and demonstrated the training of nurses as an educational problem. The school was established on these sound principles, because the Committee consulted with Florence Nightingale, and it was largely due to her advice that it was established on these unique lines.

There are now certainly 1,000 and probably nearer 2,000 training schools for nurses in the United States, many graduates and more pupils; nurses have their own national professional societies, they have developed their own literature, have their own nursing journal, and it seems only a fitting recognition that they should in many states have State registration. I know that you in England are striving for it, and that you will get it. With us nursing education is now regarded as a part of general education in the

country. Its growth has been in response to the advance of medical and surgical science, and the hospital movement, as nursing has been recognised of more importance than had hitherto been believed; also that nurses must be thinking persons able not only to work on established principles, but must be trained to understand the procedures carried out.

The origin of nursing in America was the human impulse, and the early theory was that the nurse would perfect herself by practice, thus the first schools offered very little systematic education, and the pupils had little time to accumulate knowledge as they had to do the work of the hospitals.

NURSING IDEALS AND STANDARDS.

But the demands made on the nursing profession were far greater than had ever been contemplated, and there was a marvellous development of nursing ideals. As the ever increasing importance of your profession was realised, nursing developed on a much higher plane than in the early days, and one necessary development was found to be the standardisation of schools, this is not yet effected everywhere, but that is only a question of time, and the standardisation of nursing education has been brought about by the State Registration of Schools, on which follows the State Registration of Nurses.

The Administrators and Superintendents associated in the American Hospitals' Association found the question of sufficient importance to appoint a committee to establish a standard course of nurse training, and the standard set by this Association did not differ materially from that adopted by the leaders of the Nursing Profession. The findings of this committee have been a great help to nursing bodies in their fight for State Registration. They had a one-sided fight previously, and not much backing, and it does seem as if the medical profession should have taken action long before in order to take its share in the fight.

Dr. Winford Smith then described in detail the standard course which he said was recognised to be one of at least three years. He was strongly of opinion that lecturers to nurses should be paid for their services as is now increasingly usual in the United States, and said that under the system of depending on the gratuitous services of the resident or visiting staff it was possible that lectures might be given as scheduled, but the lecturers were subject to other engagements, whereas, when the lecturers were paid by the school, it had a right to demand that they should arrive on time. It was a far more satisfactory system than depending on voluntary services.

Another feature, continued the lecturer, of the training of nurses in recognised schools of nursing is that it is carried on within the school and hospital. Nurses are no longer sent out from such schools during their training to nurse in private houses, and I do not know of a single instance in which this system has been adopted because it is considered an essential part of the nurse's training, the reason is to make money for

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