

THE  
CURRICULUM OF TRAINING SCHOOLS,  
AND THE UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA.\*

(Abridged.)

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Why go to America to study nursing subjects? Has America anything to teach us? We, who are the pioneers of modern nursing all over the world? Every one of us must be very familiar with some such expressions of opinion as these, and surely it is just such expressions that win for us from other nationalities the criticism of self-satisfaction and British complacency.

It was the League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses that, recognizing we had yet much to learn, thought there could be no more fitting memorial to its Founder, Miss Isla Stewart, than to raise a Scholarship Fund, whereby one or more of its members could be sent to study methods in that New World, and to avail herself of the course of Hospital Economics given to nurses at Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York.

It was my very good fortune to be the first scholar chosen, and I have been asked to tell you something of the curriculum of Training Schools, and of the University Course.

Firstly, let me tell you what prompted the American nurse to ask for a University Course, and secondly of the course itself.

The suggestion of a course of studies at a University is likely to bring incredulity into the mind of the average nurse. And we will wait expectantly to hear the old criticisms of the overtrained nurse—of too much theory and too little aptitude for practical work. Here I will quote a professor speaking on the subject:

"The University should be peculiarly interested in providing for the highest and most selective training of those who are to engage in the pursuits by which human life, human development, and human health are conserved.

"The future teacher, sanitarian, physician, and nurse should be among the especially chosen subjects of its educational care and culture, by virtue of the very nature and purpose of the offices they are elected to fill.

"To win for herself so fitting a place as the handmaid of modern and preventive medicine, to hold for herself her traditional place in the

ministry of human pain, the nurse of to-day can neither be too wise, nor too womanly, too trained, or too good."

In thinking of nursing in America to an English nurse, one word must be uppermost in the mind, and that is organization.

It is seen in all spheres of nursing, and the University course is only an outcome of this happy ideal.

The American Society of Superintendents of Training Schools—the name Superintendent corresponding to our Matron—was constituted to raise and protect standards of training, to advocate measures of various kinds for the improvement of nursing.

All important advances—such, for instance, as the extension of the course of training from two to three years, the shortening of hours of practical work, the abolition of money payment to students, the establishment of Preparatory Courses, all these emanated from that Society, and so did the impetus for the preparation of the Teacher and Administrator.

It had long been felt that the probationer in the Training School had a right to a more systematic, thorough training than she was getting. That the instruction should be given to probationers by qualified nurse teachers, and not by chance members of the medical profession, who could not be expected to know just what knowledge a nurse needed, nor even by nurses who had never qualified as teachers, or had shown any aptitude to impart knowledge. And so posts were offered in the largest and best hospitals for qualified Nurse Instructors, whose duties should be entirely to teach the nurses both theoretical and practical nursing. In these hospitals there would be Preliminary courses varying from six weeks to four months, in which the probationer would not work in the wards except under the direct supervision of her Instructor.

Their time would be taken up with classes of anatomy, physiology, bacteriology, hygiene, materia medica, history of nursing, ethics of nursing and of hospital, dietetics, cooking, bed-making, cleaning, making supplies, bandaging, and in all practical nursing treatment such as hot-air baths, hot and cold packs, cupping, etc. The need of class and demonstration rooms is evident for such a curriculum.

Miss Rundle then described the lecture-room, the supply-room, and the kitchen, and said that the class of probationers would be divided up into these different departments of practical work in turn, all uniting for lectures. Continuing, she said:—

It is obvious that the Nurse Instructor who holds this position is not of the bookworm type

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