

first the patients themselves resented the introduction of trained nurses and probationers, but it was gradually borne in upon them that it was for their good.

Now lectures to probationers were given regularly by the Matron and her assistants, and in Infirmaries the medical staff had the education and training of the probationers very much at heart and did all in their power to help them. The clinical training was of the greatest possible assistance.

Miss Smith outlined the comprehensive course now given in an up-to-date Poor Law infirmary, and said that at the end of three years' training an examination was held by an outside examiner, both *viva voce* and written, which, with the Matron's marks, decided the result. The speaker expressed the strong opinion of herself and other Infirmary Matrons that a Central Examining Board should be established for all nurses in general training, whether in hospitals or infirmaries, and that examinations should be held at regular intervals, like that of the Central Midwives Board.

THE NEED FOR AN ASSOCIATION OF SUPERINTENDENT NURSES.

Miss Charlotte Williams, Superintendent Nurse at the Union Hospital, Cardiff, voiced the need for an Association of Superintendent Nurses, and said that the success which had attended the formation of Associations of workers in all the various forms of labour, both mental and manual, and the improvements in the condition of their work, which the members had been able to secure for themselves, encouraged one to believe that an Association of Superintendent Nurses would bring about for them similar advantages.

The work of Superintendent Nurses might be considered under the following heads: (1) The care of the patients; (2) The Training of Probationers; (3) Their own position, which included all that was of vital importance to them in their work.

The need for improvement in the nursing arrangements in rural workhouses was not merely a subject for debate, but an hourly source of anxiety. The Superintendent Nurses knew the practical difficulties which had to be surmounted before even small improvements could be achieved. They realized that individually they were powerless to effect any large measure of reform, and at times had all experienced the depression which followed disappointment, the perplexity partly due to the indefiniteness in their position, and the temptation to let things slide when the burden seemed too heavy. If they decided to form an Association they would obtain from each other sympathy in disappointment, help or encouragement to strengthen them in their weak moments, and they would enjoy the bracing effect of intercourse with others who share their interests.

The position of Superintendent Nurses required clearer delineation, especially in their relations to the masters and matrons with whom they had to co-operate. Some of them enjoyed considerable liberty of action and received every possible

assistance in the discharge of their duties. Others suffered from excessive restriction, but it was not clear whether the liberty they enjoyed was theirs by right, or whether the restrictions inflicted might with propriety be opposed as arising from a disposition to tyrannise.

Some masters and medical officers appeared to suffer from a nervous sense of responsibility, and the same might be said of Matrons and Superintendent Nurses, and on occasions when she had been consulted as to matters causing "friction" it seemed to her that excessive anxiety was at the root of the trouble rather than a deliberate wish to irritate. By union they should be able to lay down lines on which mutual respect and confidence could travel, and rid themselves of the old spirit of antagonism and suspicion.

Miss Williams proposed that the Association suggested by her should be for Superintendent Nurses only, that in each locality they should unite to form local branches, that local branches should unite to form district associations, and that the association should seek alliance with the Poor Law Infirmary Matrons' Association, and so connect the two societies for mutual support.

THE NEED FOR WOMEN INSPECTORS.

Miss Bertha Mason, who was an inspector of boarded out children for twenty-five years, spoke of the need for more women inspectors. The work was more than anyone could possibly do, it was outrageous. The special work of the nurse inspectors was so different from that inspection of boarded-out children that she did not think it should be mixed up. The nurse inspectors should be set free to do their own splendid work.

Miss Holberton said that Miss Gibson was afraid that the rosy views entertained in regard to London Infirmaries might be supposed to apply to the country where the outlook was much more pessimistic. They must stand together to secure good nursing for the sick poor, and to help the nursing in rural workhouses. It would break the hearts of the pioneers in workhouse nursing reform could they see some of the things still going on under the Poor Law.

Miss Helen Todd criticised the period of 4½ years suggested for training as somewhat awkward.

Miss Barton on behalf of the Poor Law Matrons' Association, welcomed the suggestion for the formation of a Superintendents' Association and looked forward to their affiliation.

The Chairman said that the salaries paid to Sisters and Superintendent Nurses in poor law institutions were disgraceful. She had been in communication with the Local Government Board on the subject and was quite ready for a fight over this question.

Mr. Ward, a West Ham Guardian, said his Board were up against the Local Government Board on the question of one day's rest in seven. It was said that hospital nurses did not get it, but if hospital nurses did more than poor law ones all he could say was that he was glad he was not a nurse.

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