

## The Midwife.

### PRELIMINARY TRAINING SCHOOLS FOR MIDWIVES.\*

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The necessity of more detailed training and a longer course for intended candidates for midwifery and maternity nursing has already been discussed at this meeting. I will therefore confine myself entirely to the question of the advisability of preliminary training for the above-mentioned candidates.

Where only two or three pupils are undergoing training at the same time it is comparatively easy, but in the large training school where from twelve to twenty pupils enter each month, the training then becomes a serious consideration.

The candidates are themselves a problem. To begin with, their ages range from twenty-one to forty-five years, and they are drawn from every class.

Firstly we have the trained nurse, and *she* in a great many instances comes merely for the diploma; then we have the woman who has done a few months or maybe a year in a general hospital; next comes the one who has taken up some special branch, for instance, St. John's Ambulance work or Red Cross, perhaps Home Nursing. Again we have the girl from home, who up to the time she enters the hospital has spent her life having what she calls "a good time": she has no idea of discipline of any kind, and consequently finds the training very hard, and the rules irksome. Lastly, we have the woman of little or no education, who probably left school at the age of fifteen, or even earlier, and has neither time nor opportunity for cultivating what little she started with.

Even to the uninitiated the difficulties must be obvious.

To put a trained nurse in a ward with a girl who has never known discipline, and expect the same result at the end of five months, is impossible, and it is equally impossible as regards the educated and uneducated woman.

Now it is for the girl with no knowledge of discipline and routine, and the woman of little or no education, that we want the Preliminary Training School, as these two kinds are the most difficult to train in the nursing curriculum laid down by the Central Midwives Board.

\* Read at the Nursing and Midwifery Conference, London, April, 1913.

They are amazed at the discipline and overpowered by the knowledge required in a large hospital such as Queen Charlotte's Hospital. It was to make the training easier for these candidates that the Committee of Management asked me to suggest some scheme that would enable them to have some idea of the work required before being plunged into the busy wards. The only solution of the problem was, of course, preliminary training, but expense and accommodation are serious items in a hospital in these days. I consulted several well-known members of the nursing profession, but received very little encouragement. They all agreed it was the right thing, but they said, "considering your already long course of training" and "your very high fees," is it desirable? However, the plans were drawn up, an additional month was added to the "already long training," and an additional fee to the "very high fees," and it met with the unanimous approval of the Committee of Management.

Our methods are similar to those adopted in General Preliminary Training Schools. The School is in charge of a Sister, quite away from the wards, and has accommodation for ten pupils. During this time they will receive such preparation and instruction as will fit them to carry out the important duties which will devolve upon them in the wards, including lectures in elementary anatomy and physiology, instruction in sickroom cookery, and such details of practical nursing as can be taught before actual attendance on patients and infants.

While in the Preliminary Training School, pupils are required to perform such household duties as will subsequently fall to their share when they are on duty in the wards. These include sweeping, dusting, &c., but no cleaning of grates or scrubbing.

Pupil midwives who decide to enter for the month's preliminary training join for a total period of six months, the first of which is spent in the Preliminary Training School. The fee for the six months is £40. In the event of a pupil midwife leaving during or at the end of the preliminary month, £30 of the fee paid is returned to her; but the Committee of Management may determine her engagement during or at the end of this preliminary month on the same terms.

Pupil monthly nurses who undergo the month's preliminary training join for a total

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