

If a nurse who has not had the opportunity and benefit of a good education be called upon to undertake work in a special department, where complex methods of treatment are practised, difficulties are sure to arise owing to her failure to grasp important details and understand the reason of her routine duties. In the second place, the large increase in the number of special departments at all our hospitals, and the multiplication of special forms of treatment, make it essential that the nurse should be a useful unit during the whole period of her three years' training; that is to say, she must be able, on entering the wards, to be something more than "a hewer of wood and drawer of water." If her first few months are spent in doing work which she does not understand, there will not be time during three years of training for her to obtain experience of work in the many departments which form part of the large general hospital of to-day. Actino-therapeutics, radiography, orthopædic surgery with the necessary massage, gymnastics and Swedish exercises, summer diarrhoea, vaccine therapy—are all subjects receiving special attention at the present day, and demanding a large and increasing staff of workers. This multiplication of departments may, in the near future, entail a more extensive training, and will certainly make the nurse's duties more arduous. These two reasons (1) the necessity for a certain minimum standard of education, and (2) the increasing complexity of clinical training, are in themselves strong arguments in favour of a preliminary nursing school, but other facts may be urged which are of equal or of even more importance. The nursing profession requires, and will always require, women who are distinguished by tenderness, thoughtfulness, and tact. In spite of the great advances which have been made by science, the future is not for the trained automaton alone. Women are needed who are naturally gifted with powers of observation and concentration, who are both physically and mentally capable of endurance, and who, above all, are possessed of an unselfish temperament, which enables them to live and work in happiness, to rub shoulders with all sorts of different people—members of a community drawn from all ranks of society—without friction or bickering. Little information upon such matters is to be obtained from credentials; references are often misleading, good qualities are often absent, even with the most favourable testimonials; but the time spent in the preliminary school, where the pupils are under constant individual observation and in intimate contact with competent

instructresses, enables the matron of the large hospital to obtain some satisfactory evidence as to the temperament and character of the pupil nurses before they enter the wards and are more or less lost in the crowd. Where a preliminary school is in existence, the pupil, having passed her preliminary examination, starts her work in her first ward and is conscious of a certain status. The strangeness and bewilderment of hospital life is less apparent, the very vastness of the institution, the sensation of perpetual motion which pervades it, and which forms so great a contrast to the quiet life of home, is less terrifying. In other words, as a result of the weeks spent in the school, the pupil has "found herself." She feels insignificant; everything looms large, but she is one living portion of the hospital—and she holds up her head—she is a Nurse. With so many important consequences to the preliminary training, it is apparent what care must be devoted to the choice of an instructress for the probationers' school. She must be a person of infinite tact and eternal patience. She must be intensely loyal to her hospital, for hers is the chief duty of selecting and encouraging those of nursing ability, hers also the first word in the merciless rejection of the unfit. She should be the friend of all her pupils and the gentle guardian of none, she must never forget that from her the pupils get their first impressions of what a trained nurse should be. To her as an example and with her as a guide, many a nurse will backward look and silently strive across the mist of the after years.

In the three London schools the preliminary training lasts for six weeks, and practically follows the same course of instruction. At Guy's Hospital the class usually numbers eighteen pupils, and the routine is as follows—Housework, sweeping, dusting, bed-making, &c., occupy the early hours every day. These duties are carried out in a special part of the Nurses' Home, and form a very necessary piece of instruction, for it is surprising to find what a number of women there are who have no notion how a room should be swept or dusted, how beds should be made, or how baths and metal fittings should be cleaned. After about two hours of this active domestic work, the theoretical class of the day begins. The subjects of instruction are:—Elementary anatomy and physiology, Hygiene, Nursing Ethics, Food values and the Principles of Dietetics. Practical work follows. The pupils are taught to take temperatures, to keep charts, and to carry out the multitudinous services of the sick-room. The padding of splints, making of

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