

workhouse. Between 1848 and 1853 in Ireland, years following famine, much illness and fever occurred among the destitute received into the workhouse; later, poor other than destitute found their way there. In 1861, paid women were employed to nurse but these women had no qualifications to fit them for this work.

It was not till 1895 that the office of nurse was created, and since that date the Irish Local Government Board had issued many Orders to secure properly trained nurses for the sick in workhouse hospitals. In 1897 the employment of pauper nurses was forbidden and the medical officers empowered to procure nurses in an emergency. A Register of trained nurses was also kept at the Local Government Board Office, and this had the effect of securing a longer period of training, as many training schools, especially private nursing institutions, considered one year's training sufficient.

Certificates for training in the principal training schools were not issued for less than three years.

Another very important order relieved the workhouse Matron of all responsibility in connection with the sick, making the Medical Officer and the Superintendent Nurse under him responsible to the Guardians and Local Government Board, the authority of the Matron being limited to matters of discipline. This order was greatly appreciated by the nurses, as it gave them greater power in the matter of improving and furnishing the hospital wards and made the service more attractive.

Miss West advocated the complete separation of the hospital from the workhouse, the establishment of a State Poor Law Service, with nurses supplied from centres, as the Queen's or Dudley Nurses, with their own inspectors to direct, help and encourage them. If this were done no more would be heard of the miseries of the sick poor in workhouses. She also mentioned as one of the advantages of the workhouse as a training school the training in the artificial feeding and care of infants, which might well be taken as a preliminary or post-graduate course. Nurses trained in general hospitals did not have that experience, and she advocated arrangements between heads of training schools and Boards of Guardians, whereby their probationers could be admitted to the nurseries of workhouses and trained under experienced nurses.

As to the class of nurses to be employed in workhouse nursing, Miss West quoted Miss Nightingale's advice, "let not the best go, but the *very* best." They should be women of refined feeling, resourceful, full of enthusiasm, lovers of humanity, who would encourage and help the younger patients to get back the hope they had lost and nurse the aged tenderly and patiently in the only home they would ever know.

The Chairman advocated that a three years' training should be given in poor law infirmaries, as at Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow, and many other places.

Miss Buchanan, a Lady Guardian of the North Dublin Union Infirmary, thought it would be impossible in the Dublin Infirmaries to give probationers an adequate training, as most of the good cases went to the general hospitals, which were numerous.

Mrs. Strong remarked that if State Registration of Nurses were in force only those hospitals and infirmaries qualified to train probationers would be recognised by the Central Authority.

The Chairman further commented on the fact that Poor Law training was looked down upon by the ignorant, and said that if they did not get so many accidents and major operations as the general hospitals they had other things which these hospitals had not, such as extensive work amongst children and maternity work. She referred to a vacant school post in the North of Scotland, for which there were many applicants with general training, and a nurse trained at Stobhill Poor Law Hospital was appointed on account of her experience in children's work.

Mrs. Strong then said that when State Registration was in force the feeling as to Poor Law trained nurses would be obliterated, as all nurses who attained a certain standard of competence would rank as registered nurses.

The Chairman thought that Scotland was ahead of Ireland as the Scottish Local Government Board would not accept a nurse with less than three years' training, whereas the Irish Local Government Board accepted one year.

Miss West, in reply, said that the nurses now applying had nearly all had three years' training, so that one-year trained nurses were really not taken.

In conclusion the Chairman said that provided the Poor Law Matrons got good material to train she would guarantee they would turn out as good nurses as any general hospital.

The audience throughout was most interested, and it was felt that the subject was one which merited discussion at professional conferences.

THE SUCCESS OF THE CONFERENCE.

On all sides we hear expressions of pleasure at the great success of the first National Nursing Conference in Ireland, of the delightful cordiality of the Irish Nurses' Association, and, incidentally, of the value of affiliation with the National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland, with which, from the first, the Irish Nurses' Association has most loyally co-operated.

Miss Carson Rae, the general secretary of the Dublin Conference, sends the satisfactory information that all the expenses have been covered—and that she has received many letters from various parts of Ireland, and from England and Scotland, saying how greatly the Conference was enjoyed. We hope much it will have lasting results for good.

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