

digested knowledge at small expense to herself.

The course must naturally be paid for. Though I should not expect the Hospital to reap any appreciable monetary benefit by providing teaching such as I have roughly outlined it could certainly not be expected to do so for nothing, and it would only be just that the lecturers and demonstrators should receive a fee, as the teaching would be an addition to their regular duties. I should say that the fees would be about £2 2s. per week, or £12 12s. for the course for resident pupils, and 30s. per week, or £9, for non-resident pupils.

The difficulties in the way of successfully carrying through such a scheme are concerned almost entirely with the pupils or students. On the Hospital side it is merely a question of interesting the Committee, and interesting the Medical Staff, and no expenditure of money would be involved. (The chief drawback that I can think of would be the extra organizing work thrown on to the Matron.)

The real difficulties are:—(1) The very limited means of Nurses; (2) the difficulty of getting the free time to take the course; (3, and chiefly) the indifference of the majority.

For the first, the really keen Nurse might put away a certain sum, 30s. or £2 2s. a year, after she began Private Nursing, for the purpose of this periodical "refresher," just as many nurses do in order to obtain massage or midwifery training. I am sure that it would be better for the majority to pay for a short course under constant instruction, than to pay nothing and spend a longer time, doing the hard work to which they are no longer accustomed, and perhaps attending a few of the lectures given to Nurses in training.

For the second, if the time selected for the course were the slack season, about mid-summer, there should be no great difficulty in one or two members of a Private Nursing Association obtaining extended leave of absence once in six or eight years, and Nurses working abroad usually have long furloughs every few years. One of the reasons for the short hours I have suggested, and the freedom from actual ward duties, is that the pupils should be interested and refreshed by the experience, and at liberty to visit their friends, or places of interest in the neighbourhood, and under such circumstances many would, I am sure, greatly enjoy the return to life in a large community, and look back on it afterwards as a very pleasant part of their holidays.

The third is the chief difficulty—Indifference. Would sufficient pupils be forthcoming to pro-

vide funds for a really good course of teaching, and to in other ways recompense us for the extra work entailed? Many Nurses are undoubtedly desirous of keeping their knowledge bright and fresh, but how many would give time and hard-earned money for something which would not, so to speak, yield a definite percentage on the investment? "So many Private Nurses become indifferent after a few years," I am told, "they are no longer keen to learn new ways." "The doctors do not want Private Nurses to know much," another says, "an up-to-date Nurse does not get on any better than an out-of-date or incompetent one," and so on. No doubt there is some foundation of truth in such remarks as these, but it is not my personal experience. I am continually asked for capable Nurses, conversant with the latest methods, but no doubt Private Nurses, and District Nurses also, suffer much from the large admixture in our calling of untrained and semi-trained women. They lower the standard, and doctors, like other people, learn not to expect too much. I can only judge by the constant demand for up-to-date Nurses. It far exceeds the supply. I see no reason why so many Nurses should lose much of their work while they are still comparatively young—middle age in a Nurse is not of necessity an objection, if she have kept her knowledge up-to-date; if she have not done so, she is sure to be passed over in favour of the younger generation.

One of the advantages which might, I think, follow a post-graduate course, would be the fresh start that a Nurse would be enabled to make. I have often remarked that when an operating Surgeon or a busy Physician retires, or dies, certain Nurses who have been known to him in earlier days, and worked largely under him, obtain many fewer cases. They are little known to the younger generation of Doctors, and are therefore less frequently asked for. By returning to Hospital for a short time they would gain fresh introductions, and would thus get a fresh start in more ways than one.

This seems to me to be one way in which a post-graduate course might lengthen, not a Nurse's working life, but her "full-wage" earning days, and bring her a return for time and money spent. The greatest return, however, would be the enormous satisfaction of doing well the work undertaken, of knowing that the services given to the sick were as efficient as possible, and that no skill in Nursing would be wanting when Life and Death each strive for the mastery.

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