

TYNEMOUTH POOR LAW INSTITUTION, NORTH SHIELDS.

When people accept the responsibility of public work they need an active public conscience; it is also their duty to consider carefully the experience of persons whose work they propose to reorganise. Thus members of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, in administering the Nurses' Registration Act, have not only to provide for the State Registration of existing nurses, a comparatively easy matter, but to define the standards of nursing and system of professional education and examination, and admit future nurses to the Register.

The large self-contained voluntary and Poor Law hospitals can, with a little readjustment and organised teaching, easily attain the standard defined in the Syllabus of Training for the General Part of the Register; but it is when considering the available clinical material and theoretical instruction available in the smaller institutions that difficulties may arise, and indeed the Poor Law Unions' Association and Boards of Guardians of smaller infirmaries have been considerably perturbed by the Syllabus; and we gather have communicated their fears to the Ministry of Health.

Ultimately the Syllabus must be adopted, and through a system of affiliation the smaller institutions, which wish for recognition as part-time training schools, will have to make an effort to attain to a minimum standard.

As a member of the General Nursing Council of England and Wales, we have on two occasions listened to and given careful consideration to the opinions and suggestions of delegations of Poor Law Guardians, and determined when occasion offered to visit, if agreeable to the authorities, a typical provincial Poor Law Institution—with which one of the most live delegates—Mr. Tom Percival, Clerk to the Guardians of the Tynemouth Union, is actively associated, feeling sure we should be afforded all the information we required.

Thus, during a recent visit to the North, we proposed a visit to the Tynemouth Poor Law Institution at North Shields, and, it is needless to say, received a most kind and courteous welcome from Mr. Percival, Dr. J. Burrell Williamson (the Medical Officer), and Mrs. Croucher (the Matron).

This Institution contains some 400 beds, admits sick men, women and children suffering from both acute and chronic diseases, and has of late years organised the teaching of its pupil nurses upon very thorough principles. We visited the fine recreation room, study, delightful dining-room and airy cubicles, all tastefully decorated, light and cheerful.

We then visited the wards, where the very highest standard of cleanliness and order prevailed, and where a wealth of exquisite flowers, tastefully arranged, gave the touch of beauty so appreciated by sick people, and where we noted the nurses were about their duties without fuss and flurry. We specially noticed the evident care taken of

chronic cases—many of whom need constant comfort and changing—and the nursing of which is one of the best tests of a woman's character and capacity as an attendant on the sick.

The up-to-date operating theatre, specially fitted on the recommendation of Dr. Williamson, is in constant use, and surgical technique thoroughly taught to all pupils. This theatre is evidently Dr. Williamson's ewe lamb. We enjoyed this visit exceedingly. The Matron, whose dignified presence evidently commanded the greatest respect throughout the various departments of the Institution, was a delightfully human lady. Apparently she radiated kindness. Later we learned she lived in married quarters and had a son of seven, so that accounts for much.

The Sisters and Nurses all appeared bright and busy, and very neat and trim, and were what all Nurses ought to be—Ward proud.

Later we took tea with Dr. and Mrs. Williamson in their charming old house—a few steps away from the Infirmary—and there Mr. Tom Percival, who had been busy at meetings, joined us at tea, and we had a good North Country "crack" on Poor Law work, nursing reforms as suggested by the G.N.C., and the future of nursing, not omitting reference to a few prehistoric nursing episodes productive of mirth.

Now the Tynemouth Poor Law Institution has attached one of the smaller Nursing Schools, which may be affected by the Syllabus. For instance, at present there is no Sister-Tutor. Is it justifiable to incur this expense? That is a serious question for the ratepayers.

The Medical Officer is not resident; although his house is so close that but a few minutes' delay is incurred when he is summoned to the hospital. Everyone connected with the school is evidently deeply interested in good nursing, and anxious to work up to the State Examination standard. There is no desire whatever to obstruct, but a feeling that things cannot be rushed. The Council has intimated that local bodies should consider affiliated training, and make recommendations. No doubt this is a good plan, but after our most instructive pow-wow and interchange of opinions at North Shields, we feel much good could be done and difficulties smoothed away if really well-instructed representatives of the Council could be sent out on missions of investigation, to discuss on the spot with hospital managers and Poor Law Guardians how best to further nursing organisation and education. Throughout England there is a shortage of applicants for training. We feel sure it would be mutually beneficial to hospitals and pupil nurses if each district could be mapped out (as we suggested to the G.N.C. two years ago), and all the clinical material tabulated for co-operative training, and then by agreement utilised for all it is worth. Where are the Angels inspired with the spiritual zeal, with the knowledge, tact and charm who can be trusted to preach this new evangel? Surely they will be forthcoming if called for.

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