

THE RESIGNATION OF MISS HELEN THOMPSON BAINES, S.R.N., F.B.C.N.

St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, sustains a very serious loss by the resignation of Miss Helen T. Baines, of the office of Assistant Matron, a responsible position which she has filled with distinction and absolute devotion for the past 19 years.

We doubt if it could have been foretold when, as an unassuming young girl, she entered the training school at Bart's in 1909 that she would develop into one of the pillars of the State, and that after gaining her Certificate in 1913, she would fill successively many positions of trust, and serve the hospital faithfully for thirty years.

Possessed of an honourable sense of devotion to duty we find her with dignified charm performing her task, year after year, with untiring devotion, and attracting the admiration and gratitude of her colleagues of all grades with whom she worked on terms of the utmost harmony. Helen Baines entered St. Bartholomew's Hospital in the last year of Isla Stewart's reign; she had therefore the inestimable advantage of coming into touch with that master mind and spirit, an association which has served her well in her life of service to the sick, and in her personal association with generations of young colleagues in the Nurses' Home. How invaluable her services have been in the administrative sphere of the hospital her senior associates alone can testify.

Miss Baines has held the influential position of Hon. General Secretary of the League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses for many years, and has helped to develop it on a sound foundation, in recognition of which work she was recently elected a Vice-President for life with voting power. Recognition awarded to her with warm affection and applause by her grateful colleagues.

Miss Baines approved the policy of, and joined the British College of Nurses when founded in 1926, and she has remained an honoured member till this day.

As a member of the first General Nursing Council for England and Wales we had the pleasure of accepting the application of Miss Baines for State Registration on September 30th, 1921, when amongst the first applicants she was entered No. 37 on the State Register of Nurses, and where, let us hope, her honoured name will long remain to adorn it.

From all over the world where Bart's Nurses are to be found on duty, will come greetings to Miss Baines, expressing affectionate good wishes for years of happiness upon her retirement from office; good wishes in which we desire to participate with love and admiration.

E. G. F.

AN ADEQUATE BASIC TRAINING IN GENERAL NURSING.

AN EDUCATIONAL INSTRUMENT.

We reprint with pleasure from *Una*, the official organ of the Royal Victorian College of Nursing, the following good advice from its eminent President, Miss J. Bell, S.R.N., S.C.M., inspired by attendance at the recent Conference held at Melbourne, Victoria.

Nursing to-day calls for a high standard of intelligence, and the nurses and sisters of to-day are the matrons of the future. It does not need the gift of prophecy to see what will happen if nurses themselves do not take this matter, and also the question of more and direct nursing representation on the Nurses Board, energetically in hand, through their official organisation, the Royal Victorian College of Nursing. The gradual lowering of the educational standard and the age limit for entrance to nurse training schools to enable hospitals to be staffed

and worked can only have the most tragic results both with regard to the status of nursing and nurses, but also for patients, whether in hospital or in domiciliary practice. Nurses have the actual care of patients at present during their training which is in no way comparable to that of medical students.

The ideals of those who worked so hard for the State registration of nurses, to ensure that the sick public were given the benefit of skilled nursing to keep them from an early grave or permanent injury, would seem in process of being allowed to fade out gradually.

Ignorant and uneducated young girls will not be able to pass the examinations of the Nurses' Board, the standard of which is very elementary in character, and a further spate of untrained women will be poured out to swell the competition, already overflowing, with nurses who have devoted time, energy and money to acquire the rudiments of, and passed examinations in their work.

There are many aspects of present nursing problems besides those of salaries and hours of work to be considered. Many difficulties, in my opinion, would be removed if the present system of training were revised in such a way as to regard it as an educational instrument and not merely employment as a means of livelihood. Those of us who have had long experience in the training of nurses recognise that there are many excellent types of young women, both in city and country, who for want of opportunity have been unable to acquire an extension of general education, but who, when they come under the regular teaching in good training schools, show that they possess the capacity for knowledge and in many cases outstrip those with higher education certificates, both in examinations and practical work. Every encouragement possible should be given to such as these, but unfortunately there are not enough of them, and we must consider what the influences are which deter the more highly educated girl from not only entering, but from continuing nursing training. I think pupils in training are discouraged by the constant repetition of much unrelieved nursing drudgery not necessary to training, and that if male orderlies (not male nurses, who should be trained in a class by themselves) were employed for certain classes of work, this should go far to help. Every intelligent pupil recognises that she must become proficient in the practice of every class of nursing work against the day when she passes out of hospital and is faced with the task of carrying out any nursing procedure unaided, but finds it irksome that she must keep on doing this instead of being given a wider experience. This is what gives rise to the charge of exploitation. As far as is humanly possible every entrant for nursing should be given as wide a field as possible for learning her job in the minimum time. It is tragic if a patient is permanently blinded, for instance, or subjected to indefinite incapacity, to say nothing of the extreme result that may come about, by inexpert handling due to ignorance on the part of a nurse. The whole future of a little child may be affected for the same reason. A practical knowledge of infectious diseases and their sequelæ might be the means of preventing or limiting the spread of these. A good working knowledge of the diseases peculiar to women and of public health measures in tuberculosis is essential to proper training in nursing. Some general knowledge and experience is surely better than none, as at present.

Intelligent pupils soon learn that reasonable discipline in hospitals is not imposed to hamper their legitimate interests and outlook, but to allow great institutions to function adequately. Every encouragement should be given to prospective nursing candidates either before or after leaving school to gain some scientific knowledge such as elementary chemistry, biology, anatomy and physiology, as well as household subjects with invalid cookery. A knowledge of stenography is also very helpful.

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