

MALE NURSES AND NURSING *

BY MRS. E. A. WATTS, S.R.N.

AT the Annual Conference of the Trained Nurses' Association of India held last November in Nagpur, it was strongly felt, by many who attended, that the subject of the training of male nurses should be given more attention. It seems to be more than obvious that this is a branch of the nursing profession that is open to much more development in this country than in many others. The conditions and customs of a country like this make it almost a necessity that there should be not only in our large hospitals, but scattered throughout the Indian Empire, a staff of trained men able to take their place with women nurses in the various branches of the profession that may be open to them.

It would have been very interesting to know just to what extent other countries have been able to develop the training of male nurses. As far as my knowledge and experience is concerned in regard to my own home-country, Great Britain, male nurses are only attached to special institutions and not to the large general hospitals of the country. I believe you will find them in mental and military hospitals and in sanatoria of the treatment of tuberculosis. A place on the State Register of Great Britain and Ireland is given for male nurses and I suppose there are each year a number who qualify for the state examination and are registered. My sisters from America may perhaps be able to confirm, or refute, the statement that in that country male nursing is developed on a much larger scale than in Great Britain.

However, this morning we are dealing with the question as it applies to India where conditions and customs are such that we are justified in expecting to find ample scope in nursing for young men who possess the right qualifications.

It used to be said that to be a good nurse you must be born a nurse and I suppose if this applies to women it may apply to men as well. Whether this statement is true or not, it is true to say that many girls are so inspired in their later childhood and early adolescence by the work of good women who have given their life to caring for the sick, that from early years the desire to emulate such is so born in them that their future career is somewhat settled and they work towards this end. Surely it is possible for similar motives to inspire young men and draw them into the nursing profession.

* A paper read by Mrs. E. A. Watts, S.R.N. at the 1931 Conference of the Andhra District of the Christian Medical Association of India.