CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES.

THE ADVISABILITY OF SETTING ASIDE ONE OR TWO HOSPITALS FOR THE TRAINING OF HIGHER GRADE NURSES.*

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THE need for higher grade trained nurses has doubtless impressed all of us at one time or another. Most of the girls who come to us for training are III Form or perhaps only 8th class Vernacular. Indeed we need to consider ourselves fortunate if III Form passed girls apply for admission into our training schools. Usually it is only after they find that all other branches of study are closed to them that they "desire very much" to study nursing. Only then do they care to take up study, which will involve the doing of what in the eyes of most of our Indian people are considered menial tasks. The result is that while we get a class of nurses who are able to care for the sick, often with much devotion and skill, we do not get those who can assume responsibility either in the work of the hospitals or in the training schools connected with them. We admit there are exceptions and that even among our present nurses we occasionally find one who can and does carry responsibilities with the utmost capability.

What we need to-day among our Indian nursing personnel are leaders who will at first work side by side with the missionary nurses, and who will in future assume the sole responsibility for the training of Indian girls for this work, as well as teach them how to take care of the sick.

Perhaps in no line of Mission work is there such an absence of those who are qualified for leadership as there is among our present Indian nurses. The reason for this is obvious. It has not been considered fit work for an educated girl, and even to-day there is a strong prejudice against it for that very reason. But we believe that among our Indian Christian community at least there are some who not only realize the value and necessity of this kind of work, but will admit that educated girls may render this kind of service to their fellowmen and still maintain their dignity.

Government has been and still is very much behind in Nursing Education in this country, and Government Medical Officers do not hesitate to say that the best trained nurses are those trained in Mission hospitals.

In view of these facts, what are the needs in our nursing training schools to-day? I would say that one of the greatest needs is Indian teachers who will be able to teach both in English and in the Vernacular nursing subjects according to our curriculum. In order to do this efficiently she would need herself to be a graduate nurse, so that in addition to the theoretical instruction of

* Read at the Conference of the South Indian Medical Missionary Association.

the class room, she might with practical demonstrations in the wards lead the pupil nurses to see the value and importance of their work. In a medium sized hospital this would more than take the entire time of one who was appointed for this work. How much better an Indian girl would be able to do this than those of us who have acquired the language only after much study and who at best know it only imperfectly.

We also need Heads of Departments, such as Operating Room, Labour Room, Maternity Ward, and other wards. Our Dietary department might also improve with some one in charge who would plan the diets intelligently and economically.

And I would add also the Supply Room, including linen. What nursing superintendent does not sigh when she thinks of the linen that is carried out of our hospitals as a permanent loan, never to be returned. I think we all agree that it would save an endless amount of worry and considerable money if we could have someone who knew how to take charge of these departments of our work. Girls of good education trained along these various lines would command the respect of those working under them far more than is now the case.

And last but not least, we need Indian girls as assistant supervisors of nurses who will in future be able to take our places as superintendents of training schools and hospitals.

First teaching the Indian how to do the work, and then giving it into their hands, is the goal to which all other branches of mission work are being more and more directed, and this must also be our aim in the nursing profession. I would like very much to see that girls who have passed the 6th Form be encouraged to take up nurses training for this purpose. That those who at the end of their course of training seem especially qualified to teach be sent to a Teachers Training School. They would then know what to teach and how to teach.

Those who are endowed with executive abilities might be placed in charge of the various departments on the completion of their training, while others might be given a course in Laboratory work and assigned to this important branch of our hospitals. Still others might be trained as anesthetists. From these we would in time be able to select those who seem best fitted to be assistant superintendents or even superintendents of nurses.

Your committee on nursing knowing from past experience the difficulties that arise from having 6th Form girls in the same classes with those of a lower grade, suggests that one or two hospitals be asked to organize a class for 6th Form girls only. Some may object that this is not the ideal thing to do, it might tend to create class distinctions, of which there is enough in this country. On the other hand, one realizes that the intelligence of girls who have not been able to study beyond III Form is far less than those who have passed 4th Form. It is therefore difficult to say the least for the two to work and study together, and therefore the suggestion that separate classes be conducted for them. A class of eight or ten girls should be considered the ideal to work with. During

their first and second years they would have to work together in the wards and operating room with those of lower grade. If however new girls of higher grade only could be admitted each year, the work of the hospital would eventually devolve upon them entirely. In this way there would not be the temptation to leave the unpleasant tasks to the girls who mentally are their inferiors.

Should it be considered necessary to keep the two grades of students in the hospital, those of higher grade should be given separate hostel accommodation. A larger stipend, a higher salary upon the completion of their training and other privileges must be offered to induce them to chose and stick to this kind of work in spite of its many difficulties and hardships.

If we can hold them long enough to it, they may learn to love their work regardless of what its monetary compensations may be. In future, entrance into the nursing profession may become a matter of choice with our Indian girls and not of compulsion, as it has been in the past.

A good sized hospital, preferably in a mofussil town, staffed with at least two nursing sisters, would be suitable for this kind of training. One nursing sister should be set aside to devote her entire time to the training of these girls. She should have no other duties in the hospital except those in connection with this work. The co-operation of the doctors in charge of the hospital would of course be essential to the success of this plan. By lectures and demonstrations they would make the work of these girls of real interest to them. A course of study should be mapped out which would in three years cover every phase of hospital work including the administration of medicines.

Where possible the nursing sister in charge of these girls should live with them. If she would, in addition to being their teacher, be their companion, it would stimulate within them a greater interest in and a deeper love for their work. She could play with them during their "off duty" times, plan with them as to their future work, in short give them the personal contact which is so necessary for the development of character.

I would suggest that this conference appoint a Committee consisting of two doctors, two nurses and two educational people. The former to select the hospital and plan the curriculum, the latter to canvas the schools for prospective candidates.

FOR LEISURE HOURS.

Circle Applique.

I have lately discovered a new kind of fancy work which has great possibilities and which will interest all needleworkers.

It consists of circles cut out in washing materials and applied to dresses, etc.

This is how to go about it, first cut a number of circles about two inches in diameter and some a trifle smaller, all colours, red, pink, blue, mauve, yellow or any colours you may have. Next cut a number of leaf shapes from green gingham or zephyr, any simple shape will do. Then pin the circles and leaves