

PROVINCIAL TRAINING SCHOOLS IN INDIA.

BY

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IT is a generally acknowledged fact that, in every Community, if its members are to take their proper place in the world, and do the work appointed them, in the best possible way, there must be perfect order, organization, and unity. That we lack these three necessities in the "Nursing World," as it is represented in India at the present moment, is, I think, the unanimous opinion of those of us who have studied the question. It was agreed at the "Nursing Conference" held in Bombay last December, "That the present state of many of the Hospitals in India is anything but satisfactory," they are greatly understaffed, (and in many of the smaller Hospitals there are only partially trained women as Superintendents), with the result that the training of the Probationers and younger Nurses is often defective.

Suggestions were made for a better organization and more united standard of training. Resolutions were passed and copies sent to the chief Medical Officers in every Province; they were also placed before a special committee of the Dufferin Hospital Fund, which met at Simla this year to discuss the question of Nursing Reform in the Dufferin and Government Hospitals. I believe that most of the Doctors are aware of the need of reform and approve of the suggestions made, but up to the present I am not aware that any of them have moved in the matter. I fully realize the difficulties that confront us. No reform was ever yet made without half the people in the world strenuously opposing it, but I do not think that any of the difficulties are insurmountable, the chief one to my mind being the apathy of those who have the power to move in the matter.

The scheme which I wish to put before you to-day is not intended to apply to the Mission Hospitals, for it is a generally acknowledged fact that they are far better staffed and nursed than any other Hospitals in India except the Training Schools in the large Provincial towns; moreover, they are steadily if slowly working up to a more skilled and educated system of training. It is mainly of the Civil, Dufferin and Municipal Hospitals that I am thinking. To begin with there must be a Central Board of Nursing Education in each Province. This Board would naturally consist of members of the Dufferin or Municipal Hospital Committees, with the addition of some of the chief Medical men and women, and the Nursing Superintendents of the most important Hospitals in the Province.

I would draw your attention to the point which was fully (Rs. 3,000) the Nursing Conference last year, viz., that no Hospital can come time the

Where large and fully equipped Hospitals are few and far apart, it is certainly the most economical way of working.

The Hospital to which the Training School is attached would be in one of the large Towns of the Province to ensure there being a sufficient number of beds for clinical work.

With a plan of this kind well carried out there should not be any difficulty in obtaining suitable women for training : given the right kind of woman at the head of the Training School, one who, in addition to her qualifications as a Nurse must possess the gift of Training and disciplining and influencing others, who will set before her pupils that high ideal of character and work which she has brought with her from her own Training School, that ideal, which has made the word "Nurse" a term of the highest respect and veneration in almost every country in the West. Three years under the influence of such a Superintendent cannot fail, in most cases, to turn out from that School Nurses "Trained" in the best and highest sense of the word, women who will be fitted to take their place as equals side by side with their "Sisters" of the West.

The difficulty which many Doctors complain of, *viz.*, that of retaining Nurses at the completion of their training to act as Senior or Charge Nurses, is a very real one, but it would be greatly lessened if those responsible would feed and house the Nurses better, and pay them, at least the senior ones, at a higher rate; this is, I think, at the root of the whole matter. Most of the women in this Country who enter the Nursing profession, do so because they wish, or are obliged to earn their own living, and at the end of their training they naturally turn to that branch of the work which offers the most advantages financially, which is Private Nursing. Given a higher rate of pay and greater comfort as regards their home life, I think that many Nurses would stay on after their term of service was completed, instead of leaving at once as they do now for the higher pay and greater freedom that Private Nursing offers them.

X The subject of Pensions and Sick Fund might be taken up with advantage by the Hospital authorities. The Nurses should be encouraged to join "The Royal National Pension Fund for Nurses"; Government and Municipal Hospitals might make some arrangement similar to that which is now in vogue in all the large Hospitals in England by which every Nurse who joins the Royal National Pension Fund is helped by the "Hospital" paying half her premium. In this way the Nurses are encouraged not only to be thrifty but to give the best years of their life in faithful and steady service to work, and often to their Training School.