

ON THE EXPANSION OF NURSING.

BY DR. LEWELLYS F. BARKER,

By courtesy of the Editor of the Johns Hopkins Nurses Alumnae Magazine.

THOSE are notable words which are attributed to the founder of the order of the Sisters of Charity :—"Your convent must be the houses of the sick ; your cell the chamber of suffering ; your chapel the nearest church ; your cloister the streets of a city, or the wards of a hospital ; the promise of obedience your sole enclosure ; the grating through which you speak to others must be the fear of God, and womanly modesty your only veil."

St. Vincent de Paul was a simple, unselfish, sane man. Though not the first to recognise the defects of "noble but ill regulated charity" he was nevertheless probably the most important of the pioneers in charity organization. It was as a result of the labours of his Association of Charity that he and Mlle. (Mme.) le Gras were able later on to found the order known as the Sisters of Charity.

This order founded by St. Vincent de Paul does not, however, by any means represent the beginnings of nursing. It is a fascinating study to follow the gradual development of nursing through the ages preceding the foundation of his Sisterhood ; I have no doubt that many of you have occupied yourselves with it, at any rate as far as to have read the chapters bearing upon it in those valuable volumes upon the history of nursing which we owe to Miss Nutting and Miss Dock.

Even more entertaining is the history of nursing subsequent to the time of St. Vincent de Paul. What can appeal more to one's humanitarian sympathies than the story of Kaiserswerth and its deaconesses, of Friederike and Theodor Fliedner, of the famous Motherhouse on the Rhine and the daughter houses in Germany and in the Orient. In England, too, the new spirit early awakened. Those of us with Quaker blood in our veins point with pride to Elizabeth Fry and her Institute of Nursing (1840) with its "Nursing Sisters" ; upon the latter many looked askance because they were only "lay sisters" not held in the strict bands of religious discipline. In the Episcopal Church, also, important nursing orders developed ; Pusey's "Sisters of Mercy" at the Park Village Community (1845), Miss Sellon's Sisterhood and the Community of St. John's House (1848) are among the earlier ones, St. John's House being especially notable because it took over the nursing of King's College Hospital, and besides provided a group of nurses to accompany Miss Florence Nightingale to the Crimea. A little later than these three, the Sisterhood of All Saints was founded (1851) and from it, as you all know, came Sister Helen of London and Baltimore, who was the first Superintendent of Nurses at the Bellevue Training School (the first school for nurses in America).

There is a great paradox in the history of nursing; out of two of the bloodiest wars ever waged by mankind, the life-saving art of modern trained nursing emerged. The terrible struggle in the Crimea took Miss Florence Nightingale, soon to be affectionately recognised as "Lady-in-Chief" of the army, to the Barrack Hospital at Scutari; after her return she was rewarded by the permission and means to found the St. Thomas Hospital Training School for Nurses. The Civil War in America, the horrors of which still haunt the memories of those past middle life, was really responsible for the advent of modern nursing in America. With the Sanitary Commission of the Civil War will always be associated the names of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell and Miss Louise M. Schuyler. Miss Dorothea Dix was the Superintendent of Nurses. The influence of these women and of the nurses in the field did not cease with the end of the war; it led in 1873 to the establishment of three training schools for nurses, the first at Bellevue, the second at New Haven and the third at the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston.

Since the foundation of that important trio of training schools the profession of nursing has, in America, made advances by leaps and bounds. Training schools have multiplied, standards of admission have been raised; the circle of practical experience in hospital work has been widened; theoretical instruction has been vastly improved; the length of the period of training has been extended; the public has been educated to understand the benefits of trained nursing; and the occupation has attracted more and more women of a superior class. In these advances, the training school of the Johns Hopkins Hospital has played no small part. I wonder how many people fully appreciate the debt this hospital and the country owe to the influence of the first superintendent of our training school, Miss Hampton, and that of her successor, Miss Nutting. When the history of nursing during the past two decades is written no work will, we are confident, be accorded a place of higher rank than theirs.

It is surprising how long it has taken the people as a whole, and even, I am sorry to say, physicians, to grasp the idea that a nurse to be efficient must have good powers of observation, an attractive personality, general culture, and a prolonged period of practical and theoretical instruction in nursing and in several subjects closely allied to it. A nurse must know the elements of anatomy, physiology, hygiene and medicine. She must understand the language of the physician with whom she works. She has to learn the names of the skeletal parts, and the position and function of the more important organs of the body; she must be familiar with the principles of hygiene and of nutrition, for a large part of her work consists of attention to the details of personal hygiene and dietetics. It is desirable that she should have at least some practical training in bacteriology, for otherwise it will scarcely be possible for her fully to value the principles of disinfection or the technique of aseptic surgery. The nurse should understand how infectious

diseases are contracted, for it lies within her power to prevent many diseases when she understands their origin. Scarlet fever, measles, diphtheria, puerperal fever, septicæmia, tuberculosis and syphilis may be easily transferred from one patient to another by a nurse if she be ignorant of modes of infection.

Without some instruction in the subjects just mentioned, serious mistakes are often made. An ignorant nurse has been known to try to stop hæmorrhage from a vein at the bend of the elbow after phlebotomy by placing a bandage on the upper arm, and in the old days it was not uncommon to meet with nurses who went, ignorant of the danger, from a scarlet fever patient to a confinement case.

Practical training in nursing can be acquired only in hospital wards. There the nurse quickly becomes familiar with the best methods of bed-making, linen-changing, bathing, ventilating, caring for the skin and mucous membranes, feeding patients, encouraging patients, taking temperatures, counting pulse and respirations and collecting specimens for laboratory examinations. In the wards, too, she is trained to observe accurately and to report promptly all important changes in the condition of a patient. Through her close observation and prompt reports she often saves a life. Sudden failure of the heart in pneumonia, the signs of perforation in typhoid fever, the occurrence of hæmorrhage, the onset of an appendicitis or an intestinal obstruction, if unrecognized and unreported may speedily prove fatal. A great responsibility thus falls upon the nurse. In night nursing especially, when everyone is absent except the nurse, she must be particularly watchful, and unless she knows how to act in an emergency the results may be serious.

The general training which every nurse must now receive covers a very wide field. Besides general medical nursing there must be some special training in the feeding of sick children, in the care of nervous and mental patients, and in obstetrical, surgical and gynecological nursing. A nurse must learn how to have on hand everything that may be required for a given operation and be prepared with extra supplies in case unforeseen complications arise. She has to foresee the needs of the surgeon and attend to all the details of the preparation of the patient for operation, as well as for the after-care and convalescence. She is required to be proficient in the technique of various forms of therapy; hypodermic injections, catheterizations, hydrotherapeutic measures, massage and the administration of drugs fall within the scope of her work. She must be familiar with the quantitative preparation of solutions and hence requires some training in the hospital pharmacy. Unless the principles of dietetics are well known to her she will fail to carry out the physician's desires in the feeding of patients, and men and women suffering from acute infectious diseases, from nephritis, from diabetes, from gout or from gastric ulcer may receive articles of diet unsuited to their conditions. Especially necessary is the development of a feeling for

and training in the elegant presentation of food to patients. Furthermore, all nurses should be familiar with the principles of general household economy in order that blankets, linen, rubber goods, dressings and other materials used in the care of patients shall be properly treated and unnecessary extravagance avoided.

(To be continued.)

THE DIFFERENCE.

"I don't see any difference between you and a trained nurse except the uniform," said her sick husband.

"And the salary," she added thoughtfully.

HARPER'S BAZAR.

Never be entirely idle; but either be reading, or writing, or praying, or meditating, or endeavouring something for the public good.

As for bodily exercises they must be used with discretion, neither are they to be practised of all men alike.

THOMAS A. KEMPIS.

President Finley, of the College of the City of New York, gave the address of welcome, in which he not only graciously welcomed the Convention to his city, but gave food for thought in his classification of the bacteria that attack the mind, and against which the nurse must contend, as well as against those which attack the body: 1. Bacteria Parasiticus (the world owes me a living); 2. Spirillum Metida (time-killers); 3. Micrococcus Egotisticus, the last and greatest infirmity, for those attacked with this germ only seek to raise themselves. He said: "Those you send into the field have to contend not only with the bacteria that attack the body, but with those that attack the mind. They must minister to the souls as well as the bodies. Therefore they must be well equipped in every way. The nurse must ever show a readiness to forget self and a willingness to be forgotten."

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