

Nurses for the sick poor / report of the committee of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England.

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Royal College of Surgeons of England

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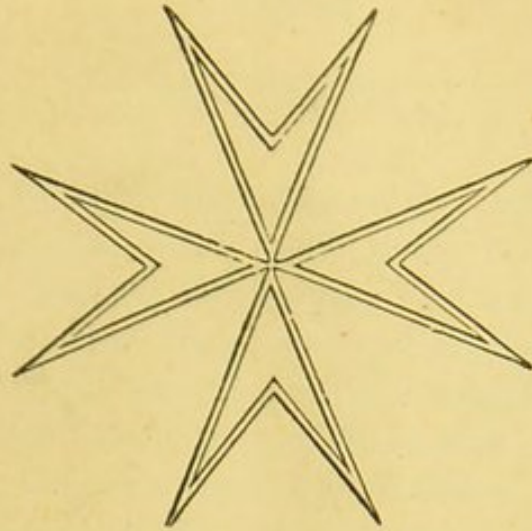
The Order of St. John
in England.

APPOINTED
ON ST. JOHN BAPTIST'S



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1874

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NURSES FOR THE SICK POOR.



REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

OF

The Order of St. John of Jerusalem
in England,

APPOINTED

ON ST. JOHN BAPTIST'S DAY, 1873.



HARRISON AND SONS, ST. MARTIN'S LANE,
Printers in Ordinary to Her Majesty.

1874.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ON THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONERS
OF THE GENERAL LAND OFFICE
IN ENGLAND

1846
LONDON
Printed by R. CLAY AND COMPANY, ST. MARTIN'S LANE.



REPORT.

AT the Annual General Assembly of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England, held on St. John Baptist's Day, 1873, two papers were read on the training and employing of nurses for the sick poor by Drs. Sieveking and Rumsey.

With a view to the carrying out the suggestions which were made by these gentlemen, a Committee was at once formed to take steps to draw general public attention to the matter. The Committee consisted of the Council of the Order, viz.:—The Duke of Manchester; Lord Leigh; Sir John St. George, K.C.B.; Sir Edmund A. H. Lechmere, Bart.; Major Burgess; Richard Woof, Esq.; the Rev. Thos. Hugo; Sir E. G. L. Perrott, Bart.; Sir Edwd. Hoare, Bart.; Charles P. Carter, Esq.; John Furley, Esq.; Lieut.-Col. Gould Weston; Sir Brook Kay, Bart.; and the following ladies and gentlemen:—The Earl of Mount Charles; The Earl of Glasgow; Major-Gen. Sir Jas. Alexander; Mr. H. Pownall; Mr. E. L. O'Malley; Mr. W. MacCormac; Dr. P. Frank; Dr. E. H. Sieveking; Dr. Longmore, C.B.; Sir Richard Wallace, Bart.; Dr. F. W. Headland; The Countess of Mount Charles; Lady Lechmere; Lady St. George; Mrs. Burnes; Fraülein Rumpff; the Lady Superintendent St. John's House, London; the Lady Superintendent St. John's House, Ashford; Dr. H. W. Rumsey; Dr. Lionel Beale; Dr. Julius Pollock; with power to add to their number. The name of Viscountess Strangford has been subsequently added to the Committee.

The first meeting of the Committee was held on the 8th of August, 1873, Sir Edmund Lechmere presiding.

The Chairman detailed the object in view and pointed out that, in order to induce women to take up the nursing of the sick poor as a profession, some provision for old age, or for times of sickness, should be made by way of a pension fund, to which the nurses could contribute from their earnings, on the plan of the police superannuation fund.

Dr. Rumsey advocated a special training of girls, with a view to prepare them for the duties of nurses.

Dr. Longmore, C.B., explained the system pursued in the Nursing Institution at Southampton.

Major Burgess proposed a public meeting in London to consider the subject, and that in the mean time details as to the system pursued by existing institutions should be collected.

The following is a copy of the questions drawn up by Dr Rumsey, at the request of the Committee, and circulated by the Secretary of the Order of St. John during the months of November and December, 1873, among forty institutions.

QUESTIONS.

Supposing that there are under your direction, or in your community, a body of skilled nurses, properly trained for duty :—

- (1) What are the *regulations* under which they are employed?
- (2) In the intervals of their employment as nurses, are they otherwise engaged, or subject to any supervision?
- (3) How are they instructed in the duties of a nurse before being employed as such? e.g.
 - (a) Do they receive systematic instruction in a recognized *hospital*? (or)
 - (b) Do they depend on casual instruction from private medical practitioners or from experienced nurses?
- (4) What *period of instruction* in nursing is required of them before they are so employed?
- (5) Are they subjected to any *examination or test of competency*, before employment as skilled nurses?
- (6) From what class or classes of society are your nurses taken?

If from the lower or working class, do they receive the elements of a useful education previously to their technical training as nurses?

(7) Do you think that nurses taken from the poorer classes can be technically trained, in the best manner, without a previous elementary and industrial education and without the inculcation of habits of order and discipline?

(8) If elementary education is afforded in your community institution, at what age does it cease, or at what age are the scholars considered to be fit for training as pupil nurses?

(9) Would you mention the subjects of elementary or industrial education, in which some proficiency is required before receiving special instruction in nursing? especially under the following heads :—

- (a) House and laundry work,
- (b) Needlework,
- (c) Cooking.

(10) At what period of life do you consider that women can most efficiently enter on the work of nursing?

(11) In what main particulars may you have observed deficiency in qualification, or defects of character and conduct among your nurses?

Answers were received from the following:—

1. St. John's House, Norfolk Street, Strand, London.
2. St. John Baptist, Clewer.
3. St. Lucy's Home, Gloucester.
4. All Saints' Sisterhood, Margaret Street, London.
5. St. Mary's Hospital, Brighton.
6. St. Giles' Sisterhood, Oxford.
7. Deaconesses' Institution, Tottenham.
8. Nightingale Fund Nurses, St. Thomas' Hospital.
9. Training School and Home for Nurses, Liverpool.
10. St. Alban's Nursing Home, Rochdale.
11. Nurses' Home and Training School, Belfast.
12. Institution for Nurses, Derby.
14. Nursing Institution, Lincoln.
15. Training Institution for Nurses, Birmingham.
16. St. Margaret's, East Grinstead.
17. St. Etheldreda's Nursing Institution, Hoxton Square.
18. Cottage Hospital, Ilfracombe.
19. Winchester County Hospital.
20. Deaconesses' Institution, Mildmay Park, London.
21. Nursing Home, Stratford-on-Avon.
22. Diocesan Deaconess Institution, London.
23. Nursing Institution, Devonshire Square, London.

The substance of the first sixteen of these answers was tabulated by Major Burgess, the Almoner of the Order of St. John, and was referred to Dr. Rumsey, who has furnished a *précis* of the information supplied, and certain *conclusions* drawn from it, which are subjoined.

The whole has been submitted to a Medical Sub-Committee, consisting of the following Honorary Associates of the Order of St. John:—Dr. Sieveking; Dr. Rumsey; Dr. Lionel Beale; Mr. Manley, V.C.; Dr. Headland; Dr. Pollock; Professor Longmore; with Sir E. Lechmere, the Secretary, and Major Burgess, the Almoner of the Order of St. John, *ex-officio*.

Their report was unanimously adopted at a meeting of the General Committee held on the 27th of March last, and is now presented.

I. PRECIS OF REPLIES.

1. Of the sixteen Institutions whose answers are tabulated, seven refer, in reply to the first question, to regulations forwarded to the Order of St. John; three give no answers. It is not therefore possible to draw any general conclusion from the remaining six, especially as in two of those six there are no hired nurses, but only sisters who show an aptitude for nursing; and this does not alter their obligations as sisters.

In St. John's House, and in St. Thomas's Hospital, the nurses engage to serve for three years.

2. As regards their employment during intervals of nursing, the nurses in two great Hospitals appear to have no such intervals; but the other Institutions uniformly speak of supervision while not nursing, and many, of employment in needlework and cooking for the poor: while the nursing *sisters* turn to parish or school work, or teaching.

3a. Systematic instruction in a Hospital seems to be the rule for nurses at all these Institutions; though apparently there are exceptions to this training at four, three of which answer "if possible" and "if desired."

3b. It appears that casual instruction from private medical practitioners and experienced nurses, is sought chiefly by those communities which have not constant Hospital training. But at the Belfast Home, the nurses are trained in Hospital under a nurse, and also receive lectures at the Home.

4. The period required for instruction appears to vary considerably, though *eight* Institutions name one year, three half that time, and others say that the length of time depends on the qualifications of the nurse, and that two or three years are generally found necessary.

5. No examination or test is required in *seven* Homes. In St. Thomas's Hospital alone a record of progress is kept, and the probationer examined from time to time by the Medical Instructor. In another Institution the nurses receive a certificate from the surgeon. But the remaining Homes speak of a test, without specifying its nature.

6. The nurses appear to be taken from all classes, though "*good* domestic servants" are chiefly recommended. Those

who need elementary education receive it, and a Deaconess's Institution allows time for study, and mentions physiology as a subject.

7. All agree that nurses from the poorer classes absolutely require training in order and discipline, though a Cottage Hospital alone considers that those qualities can best be learnt in the Hospital.

8. Six of the Homes do not reply as to the age at which preliminary education should cease; and three others do not undertake such education.

The age for training as nurse pupils is given with considerable latitude—from 17 to 36—but three Institutions do not admit pupils under 20 or 21.

9. Industrial education appears to be desired in most of the Houses, though in St. Thomas's Hospital the nurses are exempt from all house or laundry work, having learnt Hospital needle work and cooking *as probationers*. One Home says that it is scarcely possible to teach industrial education in Hospital, and another says it may be acquired there.

10. The period of life from 25 to 35 is chiefly recommended for entering on the duties of nursing; while a Deaconesses Institution names 17, as the earliest, and a sisterhood 40, as the latest age.

11. The defects found among the nurses are of all kinds, but chiefly as to accuracy, order, and method. Two Institutions, however, find graver faults; one of them says, there is a "want of conscientiousness, of truth, and of high and clear principle of action;" the other, a want of "apparently every particular required in a good nurse." Two more complain of the nurses leaving either for marriage, or for the pecuniary gain of private nursing.

II. CONCLUSIONS FROM THESE REPLIES.

The conclusions which may be drawn from the information supplied by Nursing Institutions and Sisterhoods, are herein numbered according to the questions.

1. It appears that a code of *Regulations* is very necessary for all Institutions, the nurses of which do not belong to a Sisterhood, and who are not previously prepared for, or permanently devoted to the work.

Such regulations should relate to—

- (a.) Preliminary education and training of an industrial kind.
- (b.) The character of the family in the lower classes from which the nurse-pupil is to be taken.
- (c.) Hospital or medical instruction—its nature and duration.
- (d.) Formal tests of qualification.
- (e.) Occupation in the intervals of nursing engagements :
and
- (f.) Permanent provision for nurses.

2. During intervals of nursing, or nurse-pupilage (except such intervals as are necessary for rest, refreshment, or restoration to health of body or mind), regular employment should be provided by those Institutions which are not under Sisterhoods, in duties connected with the care of the sick poor, or in further instruction, as (for instance) in needlework, cooking for invalids, district-visiting, school work or teaching.

3, 4, and 5. Systematic instruction for *not less than six months in a Hospital, after* preliminary education or industrial training, should be made imperative as a qualification for the nursing profession. Instruction by private medical practitioners, though to a small extent allowable and available, should not be permitted to supersede the period of Hospital instruction. It is very desirable that there should be a scientific school of nursing, as at St. Thomas's Hospital, where nurse pupils and probationers may receive, at stated periods, medical instruction (including the elements of physiology and hygiene) and be periodically examined by proper authorities as to progress, &c. The examiners should be authorized to grant certificates of competency or efficiency *after* a sufficient course of instruction and a satisfactory examination.

6 and 7. Where pupils are taken from the lower or working classes, previous elementary education up to an adequate standard should be insisted upon; such education to be, if possible, in some institution where habits of order and discipline, cleanliness and truthfulness, may be formed and promoted.

8 and 9. The age at which *preliminary education* (with industrial work) may lead on to the commencement of *special nurse training* should not generally be under eighteen.

10. If the candidate enter on the nursing-pupil period so

early as 18, special instruction and prooation would have to be extended to the age of 25. Having obtained a certificate of qualification, and not being retained in a sisterhood, &c., nurses should be registered on some public plan for independent professional employment.

11. Where not in sisterhoods, &c., nurses should be encouraged, if not required, as a condition of registry, to unite in a Mutual Assurance Society, for *sick pay* allowance, *annuity* in old age, and *payment at death*.

REPORT OF MEDICAL SUB-COMMITTEE.

*To the Chairman of the Committee of the Order of St. John
of Jerusalem on Nurses for the Sick Poor.*

SIR,

The Sub-Committee, appointed by the General Committee to consider a plan for providing nurses for the sick poor, are unanimously of opinion that the Order of St. John ought to take steps to assist the poor in time of sickness, by rendering available for this service a number of nurses of intelligence and tact commensurate with the extent of the want admitted to prevail, by all medical men conversant with the wants of the poor.

The presence of a nurse in the sick chamber of the poor man would materially facilitate and advance the ministrations of the physician. She would prevent loss of time on the part of the healthy members of a family, by enabling them to pursue their ordinary avocations; she would increase the points of contact and mutual interest between different classes of society; and she would act as a material aid in the diffusion of sanitary knowledge and appliances.

The Sub-Committee are of opinion that no scheme for providing nurses on a large scale could be successful unless certain advantages and rewards were offered to the nurses associated with the Order; they therefore urgently suggest the propriety of an early appeal to the general public for the funds without which it would be impossible to carry out their intentions.

They are further of opinion that it is important to establish a bond of union among all the Associates of the Order, and therefore recommend that the nurses should be required to wear a badge, which they suggest should be that of the Order,

on an armlet, similar to that used by the members of the National Society for Aid to the Sick and Wounded in War. Such a badge would serve as a distinction, and command the respect of the class to whom the nurses would be sent.

It is thought desirable that the nurses should rank according to merit, and that as early as convenient two classes should be formed, the first being distinguished from the second by some addition to the ordinary badge.

Special rewards should be given to those who had signalized themselves by special devotion and ability.

The Sub-Committee intentionally refrain from going into greater detail as to the method to be pursued with regard to providing a home, a registry, and pensions, and to securing the recognition of the Society's operations by the public, as these points require to be very carefully elaborated, and it would be premature to dwell upon them until it is known to what extent the Order may reckon upon the sympathy of the country.

The Sub-Committee sum up the main features of the scheme which they have the honour to submit to the Order, and which they desire to place before the general public, in the four following propositions, viz.—

1. That it is desirable to form an organization, in connection with the Order of St. John, by which to secure trained nurses for the sick poor throughout the kingdom.

2. That the Order should establish a central Home and a system of registration for such nurses as wish to associate themselves with this work.

3. That a scale of rewards for the nurses should be determined upon according to their merit and period of service.

4. That pensions should be established for meritorious nurses who have grown old or who have been invalided in the service.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your faithful servant,

(Signed) EDWARD H. SIEVEKING, M.D.,
Chairman of Sub-Committee.

17, *Manchester Square,*
25th *March,* 1874.

