
Letter to the editor 1897

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Training School for Nurses

On October 19, 1896, St. Agnes Hospital and Training School for nurses was established in connection with St. Angus School, under the supervision of Mrs. A.B. Hunter. Very few people have thought anything about the work since it began.

This institution was started for two reasons-to care for the sick outside the city limits who could not have the advantage of the Rex Hospital in the city. The charges were placed at the low price of one dollar and a half per week, this to include board, nursing and medical attendance from some of the best doctors in the city. The sum does not pretend to cover expenses, but was placed so as to reach the needy. Yet many are not able to pay this and they must be cared for, and are oftentimes cared for at the expense of the hospital. A hospital is necessary in the neighborhood where St. Agnes is located. I have seen two deaths from the want of medical attention and proper care while sick.

Secondly, the Training School for nurses was established for the purpose of training a refined class of our young women to intelligently care for the sick and enable them to have a profession which will place them in a position to always demand good remuneration and gain a good livelihood in an intelligent manner. A thorough course of instruction is given by the Head Nurse in "Clara Weeks" text book on nursing Hutchinson's Physiology and "Dock's Materia Medica" for nurses. Thus the nurses learn the proper uses of medicine and, above all, are trained in the art of nursing.

Dr. L.A. Scruggs is attending physician and lectures on Medical Chemistry and Materia Medica. Dr. K. Battle, Dr. Knox, Dr. W.I. Royster, Dr. Lewis, Dr. McKee and Dr. Hubert Royster, all lectures on special studies. Thus we have some of Raleigh's best physician on the staff.

At the end of the eighteen months' course the nurses will receive a diploma, which will place them equality with any trained nurse in the United States, who can demand from fifteen to twenty-one dollars per week in private work alone. The money is nothing compared to the sacrifice of youth and strength. Few understand what a trained nurse is. The time has come when the doctors of the present era will have only trained nurses who understand how to care for the sick. Many a life has been sacrificed through ignorance and inexperience, and now, when so much more is expected of nurses, they are obliged to be trained.

For this purpose St. Agnes was started to give our young women an opportunity, which is open to so few of our race. It is grievous to see how few grasp the opportunity. What is the reason? Is it fear of work? Is it lack of ambition? There are over eight thousand trained nurses in this country, and I don't believe we can find twenty of our own hospital graduates. This is a very sad state of affairs.

Now I wish to say a word to the different churches. This hospital is under economical. We have cared for twenty-four (24) regardless of religious belief, and only two were our church women, the others being Baptists, Methodists, and Christian. No denomination has ever recognized the work or stretched out a helping hand, but Rev. Peagans, who has been interested in a sick boy. He had kindly interested others for us; and if each church would make a small donation monthly it would not only help a great work to go on but would show appreciation to Rev. and Mrs. A. R. Hunter, who have sacrificed so much for our work. Mrs. Hunter has this training school at heart, and it is by observation which she raises that this work prospers.

I hope everyone will become interested as Christian people not only in words but in deeds.

MARIE L. STRUSS

Head Nurse and Matron.