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Editorial.

THE ONE PORTAL.

"It is," says the *British Medical Journal*, "an axiom accepted now by all London medical schools alike that the earlier or more academic studies could best be, and should be, conducted in a central institution devoted exclusively to those sciences upon which both medical and surgical practice depend."

This is a point which we have for long urged in connection with the nursing profession. Preliminary schools in connection with our great training-schools—and it is only the largest which can afford to defray the cost of their maintenance—are a step in the right direction, merely as pointing to the logical conclusion that preliminary education is a necessity for the future probationers of large and small schools alike. Yet it is obvious that in small schools where only one or two new probationers are required at the same time it is impossible to form classes specially for them.

The remedy is a Central School where they can study, under the best conditions, those subjects upon which their future work will be based, and, as the instruction received at this stage benefits the pupil primarily, inasmuch as she gives no return for it in services rendered to the sick, so its cost should rest primarily on her also. But as an efficient system of nursing education is a direct benefit to the public, and as the endowment of education has always been the care of the wealthy—of which we have a noble example in the endowment in the past of our great universities—so we may legitimately hope that nursing education may be remembered by benefactors of mankind, both by gifts during their lifetime and in their testamentary bequests. The foundation of such preliminary schools would have, beyond the advantage of unquestionable

economy of administration, that of furthering uniformity of instruction, and, therefore, knowledge.

And, as at the beginning, so at the termination of their training, nursing pupils, if the public are to be best served, should be required to give evidence of the knowledge gained during their practical work in hospital wards, not to many authorities maintaining diverse standards, as at present, but to one central authority. There should, in fact, be one portal only to the accredited ranks of our profession—a fact which at our present stage of evolution it is well to remember.

The significance of this contention is emphasised by the fact that the medical profession is at present so hampered by the variety of qualifications, which entitle their possessors to admission to its ranks, that a movement is on foot to secure greater uniformity of medical education by means of the one-portal method.

At a recent meeting of the General Medical Council, the President, Sir William Turner, pointed out what the consequences would be if all the bodies interested in medical education held fast to their uttermost rights under their several charters. The common aim of all concerned should be for the advancement of the cause of medicine, and he invited the representatives of the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons to remember that charters drawn up many generations ago could not possibly be expected to contain provisions suitable for the complex conditions of modern methods of thought and scientific progress. We shall do well in the organisation of nursing education to bear in mind the experience of the profession of medicine; to see that our Registration Act contains no provision likely to impede progress in future generations; and that all who are entitled to use the title of Registered Nurse shall, by one portal only, gain admission to our ranks.

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