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Editorial.

A COLLEGE OF NURSING.

The authorities of Harvard University, U.S.A., are to be congratulated on their decision to found a College for Nurses in connection with that institution. The training of nurses is essentially in the department of education, and should be definitely connected with Universities or other teaching centres. At present the value of a new probationer is too often gauged by the knowledge of domestic detail which she possesses, and which enables her to perform routine work deftly, rather than by her capacity to profit from instruction.

It is reported that a medical practitioner has been appointed to the newly-created Chair of Nursing, which we are inclined to think is a mistake on the part of the authorities of Harvard University. Medical men are not trained nurses, and the share they take in the education of nurses should be to deal with the principles and theories which underlie their work. Experience has proved that the art of nursing proper, the practical clinical attendance on the sick, which is the most important side of a nurse's training, can only be taught by trained nurses. We therefore venture to regret that one of the brilliant women who have taken such a leading part in the organisation of nursing as a profession in the United States has not been selected to fill this honourable post.

The new Professor of Nursing, Dr. Worcester, of Waltham, has taken considerable interest in the subject of nursing education, and the preliminary school which he has organised in connection with a small hospital at Waltham has been favourably described in this journal. It affords excellent opportunities for preliminary training for nurses, and also in certain branches of work; where it falls short, for which reason it has never had the cordial approval of the leading American Superintendents, is in the insufficiency of the clinical experience afforded in hospital wards,

for all nurses of experience are agreed that the important and essential part of a nurse's training is that which takes place under qualified instructors at the bedside of the sick, and no theoretical training, no attendance on patients in their own homes, whether the cases are in private or district work, can ever take the place of the prolonged training and discipline in hospital wards, which alone can fit a woman to become an efficient nurse.

A University course can do much for nurses: it can give the preliminary education which is so essential. It can maintain theoretical teaching on a satisfactory footing; it can provide instruction concerning new methods which nurses may be required to apply; it can teach hydro-therapeutics, massage, materia medica, sick-room cookery, and other details of work, all of which are desirable in the education of a nurse. But no part of her training as a probationer should be spent either as a private nurse or as a district nurse in the homes of the poor, as is apparently contemplated at Harvard. These responsible branches of work must be undertaken after the term of pupilage is ended, and she has given proof, by examination in the theory and practice of nursing, that she is qualified to nurse the sick.

We have not heard that in arranging their educational curriculum the Harvard authorities have availed themselves of the expert advice of the Society of Superintendents of Training-Schools for Nurses in the United States. In our opinion, this should have preceded the organisation of any educational scheme for nurses. Sooner or later the co-operation of the leading Superintendents, who are ardent educationalists, will be found necessary if the Harvard scheme is to prove the success it should be. Without the support of the women who have raised trained nursing in the United States to its present world-wide repute, we fear that the Harvard certificate of nursing will not attain to a place in the first rank.

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