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Editorial.

THE VITALITY OF TRAINING SCHOOLS.

The promotion of the certificated nurses of a training school to posts of responsibility is a practice justified not only on the ground of maintaining continuity of traditions and the maintenance of *esprit de corps*, but of justice to the nurses themselves. But we question the desirability of making such promotions without any intervening experience. The "wander-jahr" (traveling year) to which the German looks forward before he settles down to his life's work is an excellent institution, and we could wish that Hospital Committees would announce the ineligibility of their nurses for promotion to the higher posts in the hospital until they have gone out from their training school and gained additional experience and an insight into the methods of other institutions. No training school has a monopoly of wisdom and knowledge, each has its own methods of special excellence, which it is an advantage to nurses in other schools to acquire, and we know of nothing more likely to be of value, both to a nurse and to the school to which she belongs than that she should for a time sever her connection with her *Alma Mater*, and with trained powers of observation, and in a liberal spirit, seek to study the methods of other schools, absorbing everything which commends itself to her as worthy of adoption, and in return passing on to others methods of which she herself has learnt the value. We draw attention to this point because it is one which has only of comparatively recent years become obvious. Thirty years ago the nursing staffs of the various hospitals did not provide sufficient material from which to fill vacant posts, and consequently Matrons, Sisters and Night Superintendents were appointed from nurses trained in other hospitals.

The aim and result of true education is to broaden the mind, the tendency of a highly specialised course of training in one institution, in one branch of knowledge only, is to inculcate in the pupil the belief that there is only one method of training in the world, and that she has learnt all worth knowing when she has completed its curriculum. She in consequence lacks balance, is apt to place an exaggerated value on her own knowledge, and needs contact with other nurses and other institutions in order to rectify and broaden her ideas. We have known several nurses who have returned to their training schools to occupy positions of trust with distinction who are far more valuable women than if they had not gone out into the world.

The value of the infusion of new blood is a well-known law of Nature, the continuous intermarriage of relations results in the breeding of degenerates, stagnation in the sap of timber is productive of fungus and in consequence of dry rot, and the limitation of the knowledge of its Sisters, and sometimes of its Matrons, to the methods of the hospital in which they were trained, even though those methods may be of acknowledged excellence, is inevitably to detract from the vitality of the school concerned.

In the case of those who aspire to matrons' posts in the future, and possess qualifications which would enable them to fill them adequately, it is especially desirable that they should study a diversity of methods that they may bring breadth of knowledge, as well as wide sympathies, to bear on the problems with which they will be confronted. Such a study should be pursued from the point of view of the educationalist who realises that the greater his knowledge of the methods adopted by others the greater will be his own power of organisation, and, therefore, of successful work, in the future.

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