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Editorial.

CO-OPERATIVE TRAINING.

The Nurses' Registration Bill has, during the last few weeks, been keenly scanned by its friends with the object of making the Act, when passed, the best possible for the purpose. A suggestion made both by the British Medical Association and the Irish Nurses' Association, with which we are in agreement, is the desirability of providing that the three years' certificate, on which nurses obtain admission to the Register during the term of grace, as provided in Clause 11 (i), of the Bill, shall cover co-operative training in hospitals, thus recognising the training received in infectious and other special branches, which forms so valuable a part of a nurse's equipment for her work. This amendment gives additional clearness to the original intention of the Clause, and was adopted by the House of Lords during the discussion of the Bill on Tuesday last.

Any expert Board, upon which devolves the duty of drawing up the curriculum of training for nurses in the future, will no doubt take the widest possible expert opinion as to the lines upon which this curriculum shall be framed, and it will then be fully recognised what an important part the special hospitals play in the scheme of nursing education. At present they are much isolated, and the valuable experience which they afford is thus lost, to a great extent, to nurses trained in general hospitals, and benefits those with no general experience. A closer connection between the general and special hospitals could only result—under a comprehensive scheme, such as could be brought about by a Central Nursing Council—in mutual benefit to both types of hospitals.

We have on more than one occasion pointed out that the present tendency is,

quite rightly, to eliminate from general hospitals all cases, except those of an ordinary medical and surgical nature. The sick admitted to the general hospitals gain thereby, being submitted to far less risk of infection than in former days, but the pupil nurses distinctly lose in experience. For instance, many nurses still in active work, saw during their training days in general hospitals, enteric fever, diphtheria, whooping cough, erysipelas, measles, chicken-pox, and even scarlet fever, in addition to medical and surgical cases. Now such cases are not admitted, and if patients in the general hospitals develop these diseases, they are either isolated or transferred to special hospitals. Again any maternity cases are almost invariably cared for in lying-in hospitals or poor law infirmaries.

It is evident therefore, that nurses wishing to obtain experience in the care of these cases—and without this experience their training is very imperfect—must follow the patients into the special hospitals, and nurse them there. Hence the important part which such hospitals will play in the scheme of nursing education in the future, when the curriculum for nurses is defined. It is, therefore, wise to make clear provision in the Nurses' Registration Bill for the recognition of co-operative training.

The Bill provided that, within three years from the commencement of the Act, a nurse might be certified, if he or she held a three years' certificate of training from a general hospital, approved by the Council, or from a poor law institution, recommended by the Local Government Board. The words will now run "from a general hospital, or from hospitals," and "from an institution or institutions which the Local Government Board recommend and certify to be wholly or partly maintained out of the rates."

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