

Annotations.

PRELIMINARY EDUCATION.

We are glad to observe that progress in the preliminary education of nurses is being made in the United States, and that it is proceeding along the lines which we have always advocated, namely, the centralization of preliminary teaching. We have given much time and thought both to the financial and also to the educational standpoint of this question, and have come to the conclusion that if preliminary education is to be conducted by the best medical and nursing teachers obtainable, and if the best organization is to be ensured, the teaching must be given in central institutions rather than in small departments of individual training schools.

The organisation of preliminary training schools in connection with hospitals is so costly that only the large institutions can contemplate their maintenance, while to these they are a great and increasing expense. Last year the London Hospital Preliminary Training School cost the hospital £1,500, and, it must be remembered, that for this expenditure the institution gets no return of value in work performed. There are few hospitals which can afford such an expenditure, and even so, it is questionable whether it is a justifiable outlay of charitable subscriptions. If we recognise that nursing, like medical training, belongs to the department of education, and should be organised on this basis, then we must also recognize that it must be paid for by those who receive it.

Some half dozen Colleges for preliminary education, one each for London, Edinburgh, and Dublin, and the remainder in other large centres, would suffice for the whole of the United Kingdom. In them should be focussed the best teaching power in the kingdom, which would be adequately paid for, and the pupils would pay fees for their education as for any other collegiate course. Thus, not only would the hospitals be relieved of a heavy financial burden, but the teaching would attain a degree of excellence impossible where the teachers are drawn from the staff of one school only. And further, the pupils at the beginning of their career would learn that the strength of the nursing profession lies in its unity, and that no single school has a monopoly of excellence. At present the isolation of the nursing schools in this country is an element of weakness to the whole profession, and so far little has been done to break down a condition which is anything but

splendid. Chairmen of hospitals, and the medical and nursing staffs vie with one another in proclaiming the perfections of their own schools, and in a pity almost contemptuous for all others. Such an attitude is much to be deprecated. We shall make little progress towards perfection until we seek to know not our excellencies but our shortcomings, and there is room for the study of these, for although in the last half century much progress has been made we venture to believe that there is not a training school in the United Kingdom in which the curriculum of education can as yet be described as complete. We observe with pleasure that the Nursing Congress at Buffalo has had weight with American Superintendents and that in Boston steps are being taken for the centralization of preliminary nursing education. We congratulate our colleagues on their clear grip of the question.

CANCEROUS ANIMALS AS FOOD.

From the evidence given by the Corporation Meat Inspector in the course of a case heard at the Leicester County Court recently it would appear desirable that such officials should receive some elementary lessons on the course of the circulation of the blood. The inspector said that he had condemned the head and tongue of a beast because of certain cancerous growths, and upon the judge inquiring if he did not condemn the whole carcase, he replied that the cancer was local, and did not affect the carcase. Questioned further, the inspector quoted the text books as his authority for holding that an animal affected with cancer is fit for food except in the affected parts. If he found one part of an animal thus diseased he condemned that part and passed the rest. He expressed the belief that, although the medical officer of health had not directly authorized him to pass such animals as fit, he had no doubt that he would permit the practice.

The judge said that this might possibly account for the prevalence of cancer, and surely all who recognize that if one member of the body suffers, all the members suffer with it, will agree with this opinion. The development of cancer in parts remote from the original trouble, the general dissemination which so often occurs in its late stages, are well known to nurses, and it is to the last degree repulsive to contemplate that animals affected with this disease are consumed by the public, who pay high prices for sound meat.

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