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Editorial.

CO-OPERATIVE TRAINING.

One of the questions which confronts the superintendents of nurse-training schools at the present day is the difficulty of giving to their pupils an "all-round" education. The tendency of the day is towards specialisation, and nowhere is its effect more felt than in our general hospitals. Whereas formerly a probationer saw in the wards of her training-school cases of enteric fever, diphtheria, measles, and even scarlet fever, nowadays, and rightly, it is usual to send all cases of zymotic disease to the great fever hospitals which have arisen in our midst. In the same way obstetric cases gravitate to the lying-in hospitals, gynaecological cases to hospitals for the diseases of women, phthisical cases to the sanatoria for the treatment of consumption, and so forth, until the hospitals described as general, deal with little more than medical and surgical diseases, and are, in fact, fast becoming special hospitals in these branches.

In the case of nurses who remain in connection with their training-schools the limitations of the education they have received are not apparent. They are highly skilled in the two great branches in which they have been educated. But a large proportion of the pupils who pass through our large nurse-training schools subsequently become private nurses, and the defects in their education then become at once evident. The calls upon a private nursing institution are largely for nurses for infectious diseases, for maternity cases, for mental patients, or for nervous cases requiring massage. Of all these branches the average nurse holding a three years' certificate of training knows nothing, and although her general education may enable her to nurse cases of disease which she has not previously seen with a fair degree of skill, it is certain that if she is to do the best which can be done for them she must have had

practical experience of the special points to be observed in caring for them, and of the complications which arise in connection with them. The question thus forces itself upon the attention of those interested in nursing education whether a pupil-nurse should not have an opportunity in the course of her training of obtaining an insight into the nursing of patients in one or more of these special departments.

We agree with those superintendents who hold that from an economic point of view it is unreasonable to suppose that women who have spent several years in obtaining a certificate should afterwards give time and money in order to add to their qualifications. The fees of private nurses have probably reached the limit which the public can afford to pay, consequently a larger outlay on their education would not meet with a corresponding increase in remuneration. It is therefore a matter for consideration whether the training of nurses cannot be best accomplished by co-operation between the general and special hospitals, so that pupils may obtain experience in one or more specialties during their educational course. Whether this would necessitate increasing the period of training from three years to four is a point which will probably arise, but it is certain that the educational facilities afforded even by our best training-schools are at present by no means ideal.

It is interesting to compare the methods of training in other countries with those in our own. For instance, at the Wilhelmina Hospital, Amsterdam, the diseases are classified and nursed in separate pavilions. In the three years' course of training maternity and fever work are included, and the nurses are expected to take mental nursing in their fourth year.

In the United States, it is usual in the leading hospitals for nurses to have gynaecological and obstetric experience in the course of their training, either in the wards of their own hospital or in a special hospital associated with it.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)