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Editorial.

A DISASTROUS RECOMMENDATION.

The medical staff of St. Bartholomew's Hospital have recommended to the Governors of the institution, as a means of increasing the site available for hospital purposes, that a site shall be secured elsewhere for the Nurses' Home, and the Governors have adopted the recommendation.

We do not for a moment believe that this disastrous suggestion has been endorsed by the Matron and Superintendent of Nursing, or that the medical staff can strengthen this ill-advised proposal by a report from the head of the nursing staff.

Further, if the nurses themselves were consulted, we believe that their practical knowledge of what is for the good of the Nursing School, and of the patients, would lead them to express the belief that should it be found impracticable to provide a Nursing Home in close proximity to the wards on the present site, it would be preferable, much as all would regret it, that the institution should be removed to a site where the necessary space can be obtained.

The disadvantages of dissociating the Home from proximity to the wards are numberless, but we draw attention to the most prominent.

Day nurses are not in bed until 10.30 p.m., the work to be got through in the wards entails their being on duty at 7 a.m., and consequently they must breakfast at 6.40, and rise, at the latest, at 6.15. If, in addition to this, they have to walk some distance before beginning work, not only must they lose a precious half-hour of rest, but they have no time to compose themselves for the day, and must rush off directly after breakfast with no regard for the necessities of health.

Then, is it conceivable that the Governors realise that if the nurses are housed at a distance from the hospital it is inevitable that for several months of the year they will have to turn out not only in all weathers,

however damp, wet, cold and raw, but also in the dark?

For a large number of the delicately-nurtured girls who now enter nursing schools, and, under good conditions, are able to pass through the three years of arduous training, to turn out early and late in all weathers, would be most injurious, and we believe that many of the pupils in training, if this were required, would have to be dropped from the roll for physical reasons. The only large hospital in London where the nurses live at a distance from the hospital is St. George's, and we have reason to believe that they find the arrangement exceedingly inconvenient.

Another disadvantage to which we must draw attention is that, if a Nursing Home is in the hospital grounds, nurses, when off duty can, if their sitting-room and bedroom are close at hand, retire to one or other for a time, whereas if the Home is at some distance they have to waste precious time walking backwards and forwards. Perhaps those who have no experience of the lack of privacy do not realise what an inestimable privilege it is to have an hour in the day to oneself. Nurses spend their lives in the wards, at meals, and even in their sitting-room, in public, and the mental relaxation, to a highly-strung woman, of the quiet obtainable only in her own room is a priceless boon, of which it is difficult to realise the value, and the effect of the rest thus obtainable is certainly conducive to good health.

Again, has the medical staff of St. Bartholomew's Hospital considered how much the dainty cleanliness upon which the nurses pride themselves will be impaired? The clean cotton gowns will have lost their first freshness before the walk on a wet morning is at an end. The mud of London streets will cling to stockings and under-garments, and the caps, aprons, collars, and cuffs will suffer by being carried backwards and forwards.

It is certain also that if the Home is dissociated from the hospital, of necessity dressing-

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