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Editorial.

RECIPROCITY IN THE NURSING WORLD.

"I have always regarded the work of the nurse as a work which lifts her out of the limitations that beset other occupations."—MRS. MAY WRIGHT SEWALL

A striking proof of the international spirit growing up in the nursing world is afforded by a letter which we recently received from the Secretary of a Nursing Society in Amsterdam, informing us that many trained nurses in Holland desire to come to England for a time to study nursing methods, and making enquiries as to the nursing organisations through which suitable applicants can be placed. The German Nurses' Association, through Sister Agnes Karll, has promised to help Dutch nurses who desire to obtain experience in Germany, and in this country similar assistance might usefully be extended by the Matrons' Council.

But free trade not only in nurses already trained, but also in probationers, is on the increase. The reputation of our best nurse training schools for thoroughness and efficiency stands deservedly high. At the same time, there are constant complaints that the stamp of candidates offering themselves for training becomes yearly more indifferent, and, while the great development of medical and surgical science necessitates a rising standard of nursing, the lack of general education evinced by probationers is an increasing source of difficulty. A hospital expert connected with one of the largest London hospitals, informed us not long ago, "we are constantly lowering our standard," and it is probable that the large London hospitals are less affected than those in the country. It is undeniable that the middle-class girls of the German and Scandinavian nations are receiving a far better and more thorough

education than those of our own middle-classes. Girls of the upper classes in this country may receive a good private education but they are in a false environment in regard to work, and, lower in the social scale, apart from those educated in High Schools and Board Schools, girls, usually, are most indifferently educated.

On the other hand, it is the rule rather than the exception for German and Scandinavian girls to be well educated, and they are brought up with simple ideas in regard to personal indulgence, dress and amusement. An increasing number of these girls are desirous of availing themselves of our system of hospital training, and, when they can speak English fluently, are proving themselves acceptable candidates.

Two points arise out of these conditions, the imperative need for efficient education for middle-class girls to enable them to earn a livelihood, and the world-wide advantages which may be afforded by opening wide the doors of the nurse training schools, for many of the probationers above referred to, when certificated, return to their own countries, and in their turn teach others the nursing methods they have here learnt.

As examples of free trade in the nursing world we may point out that only last week we recorded the appointment of a Swedish lady, trained at the East Lancashire Infirmary, Blackburn, to the Matronship of an important hospital in India, that for many years British women provided some of the best material in American Training Schools, that, at the present time, a British woman—Miss Maud. Banfield—holds the honourable and influential position of President of the American Society of Superintendents of Training Schools for Nurses, and that the Matron-in-Chief of our Military Nursing Service was trained at the City Hospital, Boston, U.S.A.

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