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## Editorial.

### THE NATIONAL IMPORTANCE OF INSTRUCTION IN THE LAWS OF HYGIENE.

The attention which is being paid at the present time to hygienic questions is demonstrated by the events of the past week. As hygiene is a question with which nurses are confronted in all departments of their work, we propose to show briefly what is being done in this direction.

In the House of Commons Dr. V. H. Rutherford (one of the medical members who is backing the Nurses' Registration Bill) advocated the compulsory teaching of hygiene and temperance in all elementary schools, and said that the Committee on Physical Deterioration came to the conclusion that the three causes of degeneration in this country were bad food, bad housing, and alcoholism. It was high time that the Board of Education took steps to remedy this unhappy and unsatisfactory state of things. Two years ago a very large number of medical men signed a petition asking Parliament to make the teaching of hygiene compulsory. He regretted that this had not been done. He urged that it should be made a compulsory subject in the Education Code.

An influential committee has also been formed to convene a Conference in London on the teaching of hygiene and temperance in the Universities and schools of the British Empire on St. George's Day, April 23rd. Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal and Sir John Gorst will respectively take the chair at the morning and afternoon sessions, and the Earl of Elgin hopes to be present.

Again, a Women's National Health Association for Ireland has been formed in Dublin under the presidency of the Lord Lieutenant, the Earl of Aberdeen, with the object of checking the ravages of consumption and infant mortality in Ireland. Valuable help has been rendered to the

new association by the Gaelic League, by issuing pamphlets in Irish in the Irish-speaking districts.

The new Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene also met last week under the Presidency of Sir Patrick Manson to draw up the rules under which it will work. The Chairman explained that the promoters of the society hoped to see it become universal, embracing every man and woman interested in tropical hygiene.

It will therefore be seen that the question of hygiene is a very live one, in Parliament, in the Metropolis, in Ireland, and in connection with the most important subject of tropical hygiene it has been discussed during the past week.

To help to spread the laws of hygiene is part of the work of every nurse, and a most important part. It is good to nurse a patient back to health when ill, but it is manifestly better for him not to be ill at all, and the work of the nurse is therefore two-fold, to inculcate by every means in her power the rules of hygiene, the observation of which tends to the maintenance of health, as well as the nursing of the sick. But to be able to spread the laws of hygiene nurses must be acquainted with them, and in their curriculum of education more attention might, as a rule, be usefully given to this question.

Again, they must themselves observe these laws, and should work in surroundings where it is possible to do so. In this country considerable consideration is as a rule given by hospital committees to the health of their nursing staffs. But, in other countries, where this is not the case, a heavy mortality from tuberculosis amongst hospital nurses, due to the conditions under which they live, is common. To destroy the health of one set of persons in order to restore that of another is manifestly wrong, and the subject of hygiene is one which closely affects nursing both from the personal and from the professional side.

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