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Editorial.

A BACKWARD STEP.

The efforts now being made to reduce to two years the term of training for nurses in the hospitals of New York City cannot fail, if successful, to lower the status of these hospitals as training schools, and it is therefore to be hoped that their governing boards will abstain from so ill-advised a course.

THE VIEW OF NURSES.

It is noteworthy that at a general meeting of nurses practising in New York City, at which graduates from every school in the city, as well as from many schools throughout the country were present, a strong resolution endorsing and petitioning for the continuance of the three years course was carried by sixty votes to five. The meeting considered that it is the just right of a woman who comes to a general hospital training school, prepared to give her strength and intelligence to the work there, that she shall receive there an education which will adequately and thoroughly fit her for her life work, that the practical or theoretical teaching, both of which she has been promised, must be scamped under the two years course, that far more is required of the graduate nurse to-day than of her sister ten years ago, and it is a great injustice to nurses to send them forth imperfectly prepared, and further that the three years' course benefits the hospital by its greater stability and the longer continued presence of a senior staff of nurses.

THE SITUATION.

Miss L. L. Dock, who sums up the situation with her usual lucidity, in the *Nurses' Journal of the Pacific Coast*, says that the reasons for the proposed backward step are varied, some are outrightly vicious, others well meant but short-sighted, some are mercenary, others stupid.

REASONS FOR THE PROPOSAL.

Well-meant reasons are that "the three years course is too much to ask of women who have to work as hard as nurses do," and that "to make all hospital courses three years long is to drive hundreds of women into the short term schools." The mercenary view is that "the amount of time and trouble spent in learning an occupation should be in proportion to what one may expect to gain thereby. A nurse does not earn enough in her work to make it worth while to give three years of service and study." The vicious view is that with a reduced cost and a greater output of nurses "as a result of the greater competition their payment in private duty, now running from twenty to twenty-five dollars, can be forced down to twelve and fifteen." The stupid reason is that "with three years and State Registration nurses will become completely emancipated, will not work under physicians and will get entirely beyond all control." "There is," says Miss Dock, "a spirit of cynical belittling of hospital service abroad in the land, fostered, we believe, by the deliberate hypocrisy of quack teaching whose policy is to deride and foster a distaste for hospital work, while at the same time it shamelessly pretends to a Christian care of the 'poor.' What service to the poor is more important and more urgent, than that of hospitals, and what would it mean to them if this truly diabolical contempt for faithful, steady hospital nursing became as general as they would like to make it? Our young women, if they have any instincts besides those of earning, can put three years of their lives to no more sacred and high purpose than by spending them in the service of the sick in hospitals. Then there is another point overlooked in this, and that is the development of character in long and careful training."

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