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Editorial.

A STANDARD OF NURSING EDUCATION.

We publish in another column the Memorandum of the Scottish Local Government Board for the guidance of the medical officers of poor-houses (poor-law hospitals), in which probationer nurses are trained, which has been issued partly as the result of the Report of the Departmental Committee on Medical Relief.

The Memorandum should be carefully studied by those interested in the education and efficiency of nurses, as it affords evidence of a most important step in advance, namely, the requirement of a definite standard of knowledge of all nurses trained in Scottish poor-houses, so those who hold the certificate of the Local Government Board in Scotland will be able to show that their education has been organised, and their knowledge tested, and that the certificate they hold has a definite value. By this means the Scottish Poor Law Nurses, will have a great advantage over those trained in Poor Law Institutions in England, in which the training is of a most variable quality. In some Poor Law Infirmaries it is excellent, in others it is absolutely worthless.

The points to which we should specially like to draw attention in the requirements of the Scottish Local Government Board are:—

1. That the general education of candidates for posts as probationers is to be tested by an officer sent to the hospital by the Local Government Board for the purpose, who will conduct an examination in spelling, handwriting, English (including the ability to write a short essay) and arithmetic (including vulgar and decimal fractions.)

2. That the course of training of probationers is to extend over three years during which period they will, in addition to their practical work, be required to

attend lectures, and to subject themselves periodically to written tests, and before receiving the parchment certificate of efficiency, they will be required to pass a written examination held in centres notified by the Local Government Board in the following subjects: elementary anatomy and physiology, hygiene and dietetics, medical and surgical nursing (including the nursing of infectious cases, and of the insane) and midwifery. There will also be an oral and practical examination including all the subjects of study, as well as the performance of practical nursing duties, and the preparation of simple dishes for invalids.

It will thus be seen that the course to be covered in the three years' probation is very complete, and indeed few, if any, general hospitals can offer so comprehensive a training. They will do well to look to their laurels, and, in directions in which they are unable to afford instruction in special branches, to affiliate with other institutions offering such facilities, if they are not to be behind the Scottish Poor Law Hospitals in the completeness of their curriculum. Further, the institution of an independent and uniform examination is inevitable, if the certificate given is to compete with that awarded by a Government Department after a thoroughly adequate training.

We rejoice to note this movement for the organisation of nursing education in Scotland, which is inevitably leading up to a system of central examination and registration by the State. In this connection it will be remembered that Mr. James Russell Motion, Clerk to the Parish Council of Glasgow, informed the Select Committee on Nursing of the House of Commons that his Council, without a dissentient voice, has passed a resolution in favour of the State Registration of Trained Nurses. We heartily congratulate the Local Government Board for Scotland on its progressive action.

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