

Educational Matters.

THE EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL POSITION OF NURSES.

The recent report of the Commissioner of Education in the United States contains a most interesting chapter by Miss M. Adelaide Nutting, Professor of Domestic Administration in Columbia University, New York, on the Education and Professional Position of Nurses, embodying reports from such well-known educational authorities as Miss M. S. Gilmour, Miss L. L. Drown, Miss Anna L. Alline, Miss Mary M. Riddle, and Miss Clara D. Noyes.

Miss Nutting begins by giving the history of Nursing organisation in the United States, dating from the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893, when a Nursing Conference was held, at which one of the subjects discussed was the work of training schools and the education of Nurses. The outcome of this was the foundation of the American Society of Superintendents of Training Schools for Nurses, which held its first regular convention, at which 44 superintendents were present, in New York, in January, 1894, its purpose, as defined in its constitution, being "to further the best interests of the Nursing profession by establishing and maintaining a universal standard of training, and by promoting fellowship among its members by meetings, papers, and discussions on nursing subjects, and by interchange of opinion." From this beginning, the splendid organisation of nurses in the United States has sprung, and by the efforts of the Superintendents' Society, the course of instruction in hospital economies at Teachers' College, Columbia University, New York, has been established and mainly maintained, its object being to give special advanced instruction to trained nurses desirous of preparing themselves to fill suitably the various teaching and administrative positions in hospitals and training schools. Up to the present time it is the only course of such instruction offered anywhere. Through the good offices of the Superintendents' Society, the plans for a National Association of Nurses were developed, with the result that the National Associated Alumnae of Nurses held its first annual convention in New York in 1898. The unit of representation in this association was the incorporated alumnae associations of such training schools as were recognised to conform to certain standards of work and teaching. The Society of Superintendents and the Associated Alumnae have affiliated for purposes of international organisation in the American Federation of Nurses, and Miss Nutting notes the

foundation of the International Council of Nurses, which provides for an ultimate federation of nurses of all nations.

The report contains a valuable survey of the movement for the State Registration of Trained Nurses in the United States—a record of splendid achievement. A section is also devoted to the nurse in public schools, who is rapidly becoming a person of considerable importance.

In an exhaustive and deeply interesting paper on "Some Results of Preparatory Instruction," Miss Nutting claims that in other professions instruction in fundamental general principles in all instances precedes practical experience, and that in medicine, law, theology, or the applied sciences, it is recognised that work is governed by certain principles, and it is necessary the student should master these principles before he can with benefit handle actual conditions of work and life. In other words, he must have certain knowledge before he can apply it, and that experiments in this direction have in all instances produced satisfactory results, and been a marked advance upon previous methods. A reconstruction of methods of teaching on these lines has taken place in nurse training schools which are not only representative, but are and have been distinguished by a liberal and progressive spirit. The value of such a course is specially shown when, as Miss Nutting points out, "it is remembered that a few years ago even so fundamental a subject as anatomy and physiology, concerning which one would suppose there could not be two opinions as to its place in the course of study, was found taught in several schools in the third year. The properties and uses or effects of drugs—also one of the subjects which is fundamental, and about which a student certainly needs to know before administering them to her patients, if ever she is to know them—came almost anywhere in the course of study. The teaching of the preparation and values of foods also came along in a haphazard sort of way in many of our schools (frequently within a few months of the time when the pupil graduated). I can remember seeing somewhere lecture schedules, in which the junior year led off with instruction in the nursing of diseases of eye and ear, and have heard of another in which obstetrics was one of the earliest subjects taught. When it is clearly acknowledged by thirty or more among our best schools that there are certain subjects which have an undisputed place in the scheme of instruction in which it is absolutely necessary for the pupil to be prepared before she can either understand the subsequent processes

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