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Editorial.

THE PLACE OF DISCIPLINE IN TRAINING.

In the current issue of *National Defence* Lady Helen Munro Ferguson contributes a paper on the "Future of the Race," in which she draws attention to the lack of discipline in the lives of most children out of school hours, and their want of reverence for authority as such. She proceeds to emphasise the value of games in moral and physical training, and says: "In organised games the lad discovers for himself the advantage of discipline and the necessity for subordination; he finds his natural leaders, and for the first time tenders a voluntary homage to authority. This is important, for the modern child recognises no 'elders and betters' in the good old Catechism sense of the word; and if he is to order himself 'reverently and lowly' before any one, it will only be before those whose skill, endurance and force of character have been proved to him in a way he is competent to understand. It is, perhaps, thus only that the valuable lesson can be instilled that inequalities of merit and achievement are inherent in human nature; and it is only thus that an equivalent can be found for the obsolete virtue of reverence in spontaneous hero-worship, and instinctive homage to natural superiority."

These words set us thinking of the question of discipline in hospitals. On all sides one hears that it is increasingly difficult to maintain adequate discipline amongst the nursing staff, that probationers who for twenty-three years or more have never been taught self-control in the home, do not readily submit to rules and regulations, and the Matron who conscientiously endeavours to enforce them is apt to be considered autocratic and to become unpopular in consequence. The fact is, that evolution is taking

place in Nursing Schools as elsewhere, and the discipline needed to-day is not that which was necessary and suitable half a century ago. The relations of Matron and nurse are no longer those of a mistress keeping a firm hand over domestic servants of the lower class, but of the Principal of the training school, teaching, guiding and directing her pupils—a Principal to whom these pupils will render an "instinctive homage to natural superiority."

And though the mainspring of a Nursing School is the Matron, yet other important influences are brought to bear in the moulding and training of the probationer. The healthiest atmosphere is one which most closely resembles that of a college or collegiate school, where discipline is controlled by personal responsibility. The best and most sympathetic nurse, in a hospital and out of it, is not the one who lives in conventual seclusion, but who, in the course of her training is encouraged to take a broad and intelligent interest in everything which concerns humanity, and not exclusively in the diseases from which it suffers. How nurses respond to such teaching is strikingly evidenced in the interest taken in the forthcoming International Congress of Nurses, and Nursing Exhibition in London. It has only been necessary to write to self-governing societies of nurses affiliated to the National Council, and the organisation of entire sections of the exhibition have at once been undertaken. Again, through the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, its official organ, communication has been established with nurses throughout the world, and British nurses will soon have an opportunity of demonstrating how much can be achieved by progressive and disciplined nurses when they associate themselves together for mutual help and improvement.

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