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Editorial.

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS.

The need for the establishment of adequate educational standards and of good educational methods in this country confronts us on all sides; and not long since we were informed by a lady, who was sent officially by a Government in the Western Hemisphere to study and report on educational methods in Europe, that she found it not worth while to spend valuable time on a close study of English methods, but went quickly on to Germany, where the whole system of education is much more thorough than with us.

Those who are working at nursing organisation in this country are well aware that the educational question is at the root of much of the remaining opposition to State Registration of Trained Nurses. When, for instance, do hospital committees, in making appointments to Matrons' and Sisters' posts, ask for evidence of thorough general education, much less for evidence that candidates for these important positions have studied up-to-date educational methods? Yet while for the rank and file of nurses a sound education may suffice, if those holding administrative positions, and positions as teachers of practical nursing, have not the ability to impart knowledge, as well as possessing it, if they are not required to know something of educational methods, then our schools of nursing are schools only in name, for a school is essentially a place for education, and education is defined as "the training that goes to cultivate the powers and form the character."

Yet even the small amount of progress we have made in the direction of nursing education is considered too great an advance in some quarters, and we are confronted

by those who desire to lower accepted standards, who suggest that they are counsels of perfection, impracticable for general purposes, and who would have us believe, for instance, that the well-trained Queen's nurse is too perfect and expensive an instrument for general use, though she is all very well as a model; but that the real practical district nurse is a certified midwife, with a smattering of general nursing picked up outside the walls of a hospital.

After all, the crux of the matter lies in the word "expensive," for, if the well-trained nurse were willing to work for starvation pay she might perhaps be permitted to have knowledge. But to the ladies of wealth and leisure, who run cottage nursing associations, it appears preposterous that they may not do their philanthropy on the cheap, principally at the expense of the workers; that it is preposterous for a thoroughly trained nurse to cost £90 or £100 a year, and the fact that she can command that salary is met with the proposition that this skilled worker is unfitted to nurse the sick poor, and an inferior and cheaper article is more suited to their needs.

The same cry is being raised in regard to the education of midwives. The secretary of the Central Midwives' Board informed the Midwives' Act Committee that the standard of the Board "at present is only fixed at the safety point; no woman is rejected unless in the opinion of the examiner she is likely to be a danger in her practice"; yet already there is a clamour, in the interests of the cottage nurse, that the standard is impossibly high. It is a relief to turn to the evidence of Sir William Sinclair before the above Committee, which we review in another column, with its plea for more thorough education.

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