

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD

EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,148

SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 1910.

XLIV.

Editorial.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NURSING EDUCATION.

If we watch educational movements we shall notice over and over again that courses of instruction regarded as sufficient at the outset are developed and lengthened as experience proves the need for greater thoroughness. There was a time when it sufficed for purposes of medical education that students should "walk the hospital" for a period of one year, and even less, and when nurses were promoted to be Sisters of wards at the end of six months. We now realise that both these terms of training are ludicrously inadequate.

Within recent years there has been added to the curriculum of some of our largest training schools a course of preliminary instruction for probationers before entering the wards, usually of six weeks' duration. No one who has had experience of the benefits which the instruction given in this connection confers would willingly return to the system of admitting probationers for training direct to the wards. But already the expediency of devoting more time to this preliminary teaching is beginning to be felt, and it is probable that, as time goes on, the period may be extended. Yet the fact must be faced that the term of a nurse's training cannot be prolonged indefinitely, for her wage-earning life is short, and her remuneration modest.

Why should we attempt to impart all the professional instruction which a nurse is expected to receive in the course of her hospital training? Just as a boy's future career is determined when he is fourteen or fifteen years of age, and his school education is directed thereafter with a view to his subsequent needs, so the education of a girl who hopes to enter the nursing profession

should include those subjects in which she will later have to specialise. A sound knowledge of elementary physiology and anatomy, hygiene, and domestic science, acquired during her schooldays, is of the greatest possible benefit to a nurse in later life.

In the Report of the Committee of the Course in Hospital Economics, at Teachers' College, Columbia University, U.S.A., presented by Miss A. W. Goodrich, Chairman of the Committee, to the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Superintendents' Society, mention is made of an important step taken by the College during the past year.

Through the efforts of Miss Nutting the Department of Hospital Economy now offers "a one-year course, designed to prepare students for admission to Training Schools for Nurses. The course is a further extension of the idea of preliminary training, such as is now found in some of the leading training schools of the country, and its purpose is to give the student a more thorough grounding in the sciences underlying the art of nursing than can ordinarily be obtained in the hospital training school. It also aims to familiarise the student with practical procedures in general use in nursing. The student is thus prepared to benefit more promptly and fully by the opportunities which the hospital offers, and to bring a more intelligent effort to bear upon the problems presented by the patient."

We hope the day is not far distant when our own Universities will offer similar advantages to nursing students. The subject was recently referred to by Sir William Macewen in his Presidential Address to the Scottish Nurses' Association, and it is certain that theoretical instruction might advantageously be arranged for nurses at our Universities.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)