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## Editorial.

### THE PRESTIGE OF NURSING SCHOOLS.

One of the charms of the Nursing profession is that it is a most democratic community; and we may paraphrase Napoleon's statement that the bâton of a Marshal of France may be hidden in the knapsack of every soldier, and say that the Matron's wand of office may be concealed in every probationer's kit-bag. There could be no greater incentive to a nurse than to feel that, provided she possesses the necessary qualifications, combined with devotion to duty, there is nothing to prevent her from rising to the highest position in her profession, with the reservation that the larger nursing schools train many pupils annually and that only one, in a long series of years, can be chosen as head of the school.

Twenty years ago the number of trained nurses was much more limited than to-day, and, consequently, promotion to Matrons' posts was very much quicker. With the increase in the number of qualified nurses promotion is delayed, and the age of the women who have proved, both by personal character and administrative ability, that they have the capacity for holding the highest offices in their profession, is necessarily raised. We must frankly own that we consider the age limit of forty mentioned in the advertisement, declaring the office of Matron and Superintendent of Nursing at St. Bartholomew's Hospital vacant, a mistake—as by far the most suitable and desirable candidates might be a few years beyond this limit, and we sincerely hope that the Committee of Election will waive this proviso should it be found expedient to do so.

It is generally recognised that the Training Schools for Nurses in connection with

four of the largest Metropolitan hospitals take precedence—those of the two Royal hospitals of St. Bartholomew's and St. Thomas's, of Guy's and the London—not because the training in some of the smaller hospitals may not be equally good, but because of their ancient foundations and splendid attainments in the healing of the sick.

The Matronships of these hospitals are recognised as the blue ribands of the nursing profession, the individuality of each school has developed on distinctive lines and it has its own methods and traditions—traditions of which the nursing staff are justly proud. The system of administration varies in each of these schools, and in these days to seek a Superintendent outside the ranks of their own graduates would greatly lower their prestige, and be resented by every nurse whose work has helped to build up their first-class reputations.

It is very seldom that the Matronship of one of these large training schools is advertised as vacant—committees on more than one occasion having honoured a lady trained under their authority, and whose subsequent record as an able administrator is known to them, by inviting her to accept this honourable position.

It may be safely asserted that unless amongst the many pupils who have been trained in a leading nursing school one can be found, when a vacancy occurs, possessing the knowledge, experience, and personal attributes qualifying her to assume the position of head of the school, there is something wrong in the system of nurse training, and it behoves the Governors of the hospital with which it is connected to make searching inquiry into that system to discover the reason for its failure in efficiency.

We may waive aside any probability that

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)