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Editorial.

GAMES FOR NURSES.

One of the features of the present century is that we are realising the wisdom and necessity of a healthy method of life for all sections of the community, and the idea is penetrating even into the almost cloistered seclusion of our Nurses' Homes that professional keenness is not incompatible with interest in other pursuits, that it is not necessary to ruin one's own health to prove one's devotion to the sick, and that it is unnecessary and inexpedient that the health of nurses should be broken down in order to restore that of the patients. The modern nurse realises that her duty to her patients and herself demands that she should not ignore but preserve her own health; that the effect of a life spent in wards full of sick people, and of segregation in close quarters in a Nurses' Home must be counter-balanced by exercise in the fresh air—exercise which the modern nurse misses the more because, before she entered a hospital she probably lived the healthy life of the normal girl and enjoyed, with zest, the tennis, hockey, croquet, and golf, which both at school and at home had place in her daily life.

Further, the demands of modern nursing make a constant tax on the mental powers of the nurse. Physically her duties are much less exacting than they were a quarter of a century ago, but so long as she is on duty she undergoes severe mental tension, for which the best antidote is physical exercise. In the past the craving for physical exertion has been demonstrated in the well-known love of nurses for dancing. After a long day's exhausting work in the wards, dance music has only to be played in the Nurses' Home after duty hours to meet with an immediate response, and feet which

for many long hours have moved sedately, and sometimes wearily, up and down the wards, will be twinkling in unison with the rhythm of the music. But at best dancing is exercise in a somewhat close environment, and the present day love of exercise in the open is much to be encouraged.

In another column we refer to the keenness with which some nurses play hockey in their off duty hours, others again take up swimming *con amore*. In London, of course, they are restricted to swimming baths, and the nurses of Guy's Hospital have the joy of a fine swimming bath in their own home, and certificates are granted to two classes, (A) those who can swim two lengths of the bath *without resting*, and (B) those who can swim twice the distance between the rope and the shallow end, and there is keen competition to gain these certificates granted.

The Chelsea Infirmary nurses have now adopted swimming as a recreation, and have organised a swimming club in connection with their League. No recreation could be more delightful or health giving, and for nurses who live or take their holidays near rivers, lakes, and the sea, its pleasure is intensified.

Cycling, tennis, and golf are other healthy forms of recreation enjoyed. Nurses have been so occupied in the past in developing their work that they have had little time to think of play, or more accurately perhaps of necessary recreation, but now that their duties are better defined and their hours in hospitals shorter, they will no doubt, in increasing numbers turn their attention to maintaining the *mens sana in corpore sano*, and enjoy outdoor sports with the keenness which they bring to bear upon their professional work when on duty.

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