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Editorial.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOUND EDUCATION.

Viscount Haldane, whose words are always pregnant with wisdom, made a notable speech on Education when he attended the Foundation Day proceedings at Mill Hill School last Saturday.

Education is a question with which those who are interested in the future of the nursing profession are anxiously concerned, for on the future of its educational system depends its increased honour and prestige or the reverse.

Lord Haldane wisely says: "We have been very backward in understanding education in this country. We have divided it as though the elementary stage stands by itself in a water-tight compartment, as though the secondary school and public school do another quite separate section of the work, with the University on the top; and as if the education of life is again quite detached from the rest. That is not true. Life is not a thing to cut into bits; it is one continuous curve. To-day we are getting a wider view of education. A good deal has been learned from the Continent and a good deal from hard experience."

Lord Haldane said further, that as Chairman of the Royal Commission on University Education in London he had learnt two very important things—one was that the nation was waking up about education and that very great advances were being made; and the other, that this awakening had come none too soon because the world was moving on, and other nations had been advancing, sometimes more quickly than ourselves. The nation had learnt that education was one and indivisible. Organisation was the order of the day, and without it nothing could be done. In the elementary stage

we gave, or ought to give, all our citizens the indispensable minimum; in the secondary stage we taught them to be lieutenants and leaders, although the whole training of leadership could not be given in that period, and, in the stage of the University, the great lesson of the higher leadership was taught.

But if Continental schools were before us in the acquisition of learning, as schools of character the English public schools were not to be beaten. Our schools trained in perfection in that kind of character which was essential for the leadership of men. The boys were taught to govern themselves, and not to be dependent on the authority of a master however distinguished. That made up for many things in which Continental schools excelled. The best thing boys could have was mind and character—character which would teach them to speak the truth and assert themselves on the side of what was right, and to remember that they were not isolated individuals who could live selfishly, regardless of responsibility, to their fellow men.

How do our nurse training schools stand this test? With few exceptions they do not turn out the forceful characters exhibited by nurses trained in the harder schools of a quarter of a century ago, and the reason is, we believe, that self-government is discouraged, and blind obedience and subservience held to be synonymous with loyalty. When our nursing schools are given their rightful place as part of our educational system, and qualifications as educationalists are required of those who direct them, we may hope that greater importance will be attached to the development of self-reliant character and the qualities of leadership, to which so great importance is attached by the Secretary of State for War.

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