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EDITORIAL.

A BRANCH OF NURSING EDUCATION.

A most important part of the duty of the Matron of a hospital is the supervision of the commissariat. In a small hospital she usually attends to the details; in a large one she exercises a general supervision, being responsible both for the nutritive and palatable quality, and the variety of the food supplied to the patients and the resident staff—medical, nursing, and domestic—and the efficiency, combined with economy, of the department.

It must be confessed that most Matrons and Home Sisters are but ill-equipped for this branch of their work, and, although more attention has been paid to it of recent years, much remains to be done. This journal, for the last twenty years, has consistently drawn attention to the importance of the subject of dietetics as a necessary part of the training of a nurse.

It is therefore with some satisfaction that we note that the National Food Reform Association are taking up this important question, and that its Matrons and Schools Committees have formed a joint committee with instructions to bring the matter before the university, and other colleges and training schools, as well as the public generally, and the committee are confident that these institutions will not be backward in offering facilities to those desirous of entering this field of work for women.

The hope of the Association is that it will increasingly come to be regarded as a link between duly qualified women and those seeking their services. The movement once again reminds us of the deficiencies in the curricula of training for nurses, even in some of our largest hospitals.

Only last week we interviewed a number of nurses from large hospital training schools,

and not one of them at the end of three years' training had had a lecture on dietetics, bacteriology, hygiene, or materia medica, and it is not long ago, since the secretary of one of our largest London hospitals, giving evidence at an inquest on a patient to whom a fatal dose of a drug was administered through the ignorance of a nurse, practically denied the necessity for giving precise teaching to nurses on the properties and doses of the drugs they are required to administer.

In the United States of America and Canada far more attention is paid to dietetics than in this country, Teachers College, Columbia University, leading the way in its School of Household Arts, of which the Department of Nursing and Health under the direction of Professor M. A. Nutting forms a part.

This School has a building erected at a cost of half a million dollars, equipped with laboratories, for food chemistry, and sanitary chemistry.

The elective courses recommended to the students in the Department of Nursing and Health include those on Food Production and Manufacture, Household Chemistry, Elementary Food Economics, Dietary Administration, Dietetics, Food Preparation, Cooking for Invalids, and Marketing, and we also find included in the Preparatory Course for Admission to Training Schools for Nurses that the following courses are required—Chemistry, Elementary Food Economics, Food Preparation, and Cookery for Invalids.

It is time, therefore, that if the training schools in this country are to keep pace with those on the other side of the Atlantic, to say nothing of the knowledge of household and domestic arts possessed by our German and French colleagues, that they seriously attacked the subject of Dietetics.

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