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## EDITORIAL.

### A COLLEGIATE LIFE FOR NURSES.

The old order is changing, and in no section of the community more than in the nursing world in reference to the conditions of work and life of nurses. Rightly so, for, both as to hours on duty and payment for skilled services, unjustifiably long hours have been exacted from them, and their strenuous and responsible work has been rewarded with most meagre pay. But, now that hours on duty are being lessened, hospital governors and Boards of Guardians are confronted with a very acute problem in connection with accommodation for their nursing staffs, for hours on duty cannot be shortened without materially increasing the staff, and, in addition to a considerable increase in expense as to salaries, the enlargement of Nursing Homes is urgently needed at a time when building is more costly and labour scarcer than ever before.

In addition they are faced by the consideration that the modern girl when off duty in many instances wishes to be her own mistress, and life in a Nurses' Home, where she is under strict rule, does not attract her. She prefers an occupation in which she can "live out."

The pros and cons of the position require very careful consideration, and we propose to examine them both from the point of view of the nurses, and also that of the patients, who must be every true nurse's first consideration.

The proposal that nurses should live out is urged by the Lambeth Board of Guardians, through its Chairman, Mr. Frank Briant, M.P., and the Ministry of Health has been invited to consider it, both on the ground of saving to the ratepayers in the matter of building, furnishing, and equipping new quarters for additional nurses, and also because it is believed that it would tend to attract the best type of women to the work. It is assumed that if an eight

hours' day is in force there is no reason why nurses, like clerical workers, should not live at home and attend the hospitals daily. But the care of the sick, which goes on continuously the 24 hours round, for seven days a week, is not comparable with the work of clerks for one shift of eight hours on 5½ days a week.

Supposing that the nursing staff lived out, the first day shift, which would have to be in the wards early in the morning, could not be relied upon. In such a climate as ours the discomfort on cold and wet mornings would certainly be prejudicial to the health of the nurses. A certain proportion would not arrive on duty at all, and others would begin the day below par. The patients as well as the nurses would suffer from the disorganization thus arising.

Another point, which cannot be overlooked, is the circumscribed area from which the nursing staff of a hospital would be drawn. At present such staffs are recruited from all over the kingdom. To meet this difficulty it is probable that hostels would grow up in the neighbourhood of hospitals, but such hostels would have to be most carefully supervised.

In our opinion, the best results would be obtained by retaining the provision for housing the nursing staffs of hospitals in Homes provided for this purpose, but by reorganizing such Homes on a collegiate basis, so that when off duty the nurses would have the freedom of action which undergraduates are permitted during their residence, in college, at a University. The charm of life under such communal conditions is both healthy and invigorating, and is often looked forward to, and back upon, by young men and women as the happiest time in their lives. There is no reason why the same good fellowship and comradeship, potent influences in the development of character, should not form an integral part of the three years' training course for nurses.

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