

well-educated men. Simultaneously Matriculation at the Universities ceased to be the empty form it had hitherto been, and Woolwich and Sandhurst coming into existence emphasized the rule, which has ever since been absolute, that the possession of a good general education must be proved by anyone desirous to enter any profession in England.

Reasoning from analogy, therefore, looking on the one hand at what all other skilled callings have demanded from their followers, and on the other, at the class of women who are now engaged in, or anxious to begin, Nursing, it appears to us that, in a very short space of time, we shall probably see a Preliminary Examination instituted for Nurses, and only those who are successful in passing it become eligible for admission to a Training School. Perhaps, at first, the subjects of this Examination would comprise only the elements of an ordinary English education, but modern languages, or the details of housekeeping, might well be made optional subjects, proficiency in either or both of which would confer a higher place in the Pass List. The advantages of such an Examination as this are obvious. Not only would it ensure that Nursing, like the other professions, would only be open to educated people, but it would immediately and largely diminish the excessive crowding into the ranks, which is now prevalent. It would, in all probability, more largely than any other measure could do, limit the number and raise the class of workers, and also, therefore, improve the remuneration of the work.

But this ordeal passed, and the successful candidate, we will imagine, admitted as a Probationer at a recognised Training School, what course of instruction will she there find laid down for her to follow? At present, even at the best regulated Hospitals, what do we discover? The Probationer has to attend a course of lectures upon Elementary Anatomy and Surgical Nursing, and another upon Elementary Physiology and Medical Nursing, and perhaps a third upon Practical Nursing. At the end of her first year she is examined as to her progress, and at the end of her term of training her proficiency is similarly tested by written papers and *viva voce*. If she passes in these theoretical subjects, and has conducted herself satisfactorily in her Ward work, she gains a certificate. If she fails in the theory, however good she may be in the practice, of her calling, she is denied the official testimonial of efficiency. Then as regards the course of practical instruction. At the best this is usually most haphazard. Nominally the Probationer may be supposed to spend so many months in the Surgical, so many in the

Medical, and perhaps a certain time in the Obstetric and Isolation Wards, in addition; so many months on day, and so many weeks at night, duty. But, as a matter of fact, the arrangement is never strictly adhered to. Emergencies demand a special Nurse here or there; the invaliding of one requires the sudden shifting of another Probationer; and so it may come to pass that one Nurse completes her term of training, who has had no experience at all in Medical Wards, and another concludes hers with an equally limited acquaintance with Surgical cases.

Now, when it is remembered that, alike in Medicine and Nursing, practical experience is all-important, it becomes evident that far too much stress is now-a-days laid upon mere theoretical knowledge. In fact, we have no hesitation in saying that theory should take an entirely secondary place in a Nurse's education. At the bedside it is the gentle tact and purely practical knowledge which tells, and there is the touchstone which reveals the best Nurse. We do not wish to be misunderstood. We do not decry the theoretical part of a Nurse's training, but we see very clearly that the highly educated, intellectual women, who have of late years, in such large numbers, adopted Nursing as their occupation, have almost imperceptibly tended to idealise the work, and, by their own mental abilities, have exalted theoretical knowledge, to the great depreciation of practical experience. We believe that this will, in time, correct itself; but our present object is to urge that the theoretical part of a Nurse's training should be relegated to its proper place, as a preliminary to the more important after education, as explanatory only of what is to be afterwards learnt—that the theory of Nursing, in fact, is only the preface to its intelligent practice. This is realised and carried on in the case of Medical and Legal students. It is, therefore, only consonant with analogy, as well as common sense, to contend for the application of the same principle in the training of Nurses.

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AS OTHERS SEE US.—A journal that ought to be read by all who are interested in the care of the sick is the *Nursing Record*. This is the first number we have seen, but judging from it we can cordially recommend it as a valuable adjunct to a noble cause. (London: Sampson Low and Co.)—*Christian Commonwealth*.

A CHEERFUL temper, joined with innocence, will make beauty attractive, knowledge delightful and wit good-natured. It will lighten sickness, poverty and affliction, convert ignorance into an amiable simplicity, and render deformity itself agreeable.

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