

action may be, and however successful it may prove in producing, in time, excellent Nurses—we maintain that he is tacitly depreciating the value of skilled attendance after labour.

But we are fain to believe that the custom is daily becoming more honoured in its breach than in its observance. There is evidently a growing feeling that in no branch of Nursing is careful training more important, and the good results of skilled work more manifest, than amongst Monthly Nurses. The weighty expressions of Dr. Cullingworth upon this matter, in the paper read before the British Nurses' Association last May, and duly reported in these columns at the time, may well be quoted and remembered.

He said: "I believe it to be altogether a wrong system for women to be trained as Monthly Nurses, before they have undergone a training in general Nursing. It is reversing the natural order of things. Nature invariably proceeds from the simple to the complex—from the general to the special; and no education can be sound or successful that does not, in this respect, adopt Nature's methods. A Monthly Nurse, properly speaking, is a woman skilled in general Nursing, and something more—that is to say, besides having obtained the knowledge and skill that all Trained Nurses are supposed to possess, she has qualified herself, by special training and experience, for a distinct branch of Nursing. In the exercise of her special calling she will find herself continually called upon to perform the duties of an ordinary Nurse. She will have to wash and dress her patient, make her bed, administer food, medicine, and enemata, keep records of pulse and temperature, and so on. And besides all these, she will have duties to perform special to the lying-in chamber—duties for which it has been the object of her special training to qualify her.

"In what I am now saying, I am not Quixotically tilting at a windmill. The system of entering for training as a Monthly Nurse—without any previous knowledge of skilled Nursing—is one that prevails very largely. I want to enlist your co-operation in opposing it. See what it entails. The special training of a Monthly Nurse is supposed to be acquired in about two months. How much of this special training is a woman likely to obtain in that time, if she has first to be taught how to use a thermometer, how to pass a catheter, how to administer an enema, how to change a patient's linen, and so on? All her time will be taken up in mastering these elementary duties—duties that she ought to have known all about before coming to a special Institution; and the result is that she completes her course of training, having derived from it but a small part of the benefit she might have done.

"The duties of a Nurse during labour, the minute care required after labour is over, the watching for, and recognition of, the subtle changes that indicate impending mischief during the anxious period of lying-in, the mysteries of baby-washing, baby-dressing, and baby-feeding, are quite as much as anyone can learn in the time allotted; and it cannot be wondered at that those Nurses, whose training-time has been occupied in learning what they ought to have already known, turn out failures."

As we have said before, we are in most cordial agreement with the sentiments expressed by Dr. Cullingworth on this subject, and believe that they represent a very widely-spread feeling amongst Medical men at present. It would appear, therefore, most probable that the necessity for a thorough training in general nursing before the course of instruction in Monthly Nursing is commenced, will shortly be universally recognised. Even now it is well known that an ever-increasing number of Nurses, upon the completion of their term of work in Metropolitan Hospitals, pass on to the Lying-in Institutions for one or two months of further tuition and special experience.

In reviewing the conditions of Midwives' education, the conclusion was reached that it would sooner or later be deemed essential for each and every one who desired to fulfil her duties with the utmost efficiency to have passed through a complete course of training in the practical and theoretical details of general, and of Monthly, Nursing. Now the conclusion would equally seem to be that the Monthly Nurse should also pass through a similar course of general work. And also, just as we expressed our belief that the Midwife should be a Monthly Nurse as well, so we feel that it would be a great advantage to the Monthly Nurse to be practically acquainted with at least the elements of the Obstetric Art. Very often the Doctor may not be present when needed, and then the more skilled the Nurse, the better is it for both mother and child.

In all our consideration of this subject we have attempted rather to forecast the probable principles upon which the education of Midwives and Monthly Nurses will in future proceed, than to descend to details impossible at present to be gauged or defined. In brief, then, it would seem as if Nursing knowledge must form the essential basis. Upon this would be founded, first, the course of instruction through which all must pass who aspire to tend the sick or lying-in women. Then upon, and rising from, this general nursing groundwork would be the special course of tuition in monthly nursing, and rising still from this the further special education which those would receive who desired to become Midwives.

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