

powers on this Society to examine and certificate candidates in Medicine who were not prepared to reach to the high standard even then maintained by the College of Physicians.

Until the last thirty years the general Medical Practitioner in England was generally obliged to gain his Surgical diploma at the College of Surgeons, and his Medical qualification at the Apothecaries' Hall. The Obstetrical art was presumed to be acquired, but it was deemed to be outside the sphere of the Surgeons, and was only perfunctorily recognised by other examining bodies. The advent of Medical Registration, however, instantly drew attention to this as to other glaring deficiencies, and coincidentally with the greater care given to the education of students came greater knowledge, and carefulness, on the part of the teachers. Thus, in a very brief space of time, Midwifery took its place in the curriculum of the Medical Schools, and Obstetricians became recognised as a class of workers allied both to Physicians and Surgeons, but distinct from both.

The Medical profession now shows signs of settlement from the necessary upheaval caused by the institution of its legal Registration. And amongst other signs we see the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons in London have united to give students a conjoint examination, and a double diploma, qualifying them to practice in Medicine, Surgery, and Obstetrics. It may safely be predicted that within a very few years a similarly complete qualification will be required from all who desire to practise as Doctors in this country. But the point upon which we desire to lay stress is that, although there are now recognised Physicians, Surgeons, and Obstetricians, and also general practitioners who combine in themselves the three first titles, every member of each class must have passed through a fixed period of four years' general training of education in each branch of the profession before he can obtain from any State authority the legal diploma to practise as a Medical man in any capacity whatsoever. And the absolute necessity for this general knowledge surely needs no demonstration.

So in the first place, and before we proceed to give to Mr. HAWARD's paper the consideration which it so thoroughly deserves, we may lay down an axiom which we presume no professional person will dispute. That whether a woman devotes herself to the nursing of any special class of cases or not, it is essential that she should have had a complete preliminary training in both medical and surgical work.

How long a period that training should occupy may be, and probably would be at present, disputed; but in this connection it is most interesting to us to notice how strongly the tide is setting now with

the opinion expressed by the British Nurses' Association, as to the necessity of a three years' minimum limit. We noted some months ago in these columns that the Army Nursing Department will now appoint no Sister who has not had this period of Hospital work, and we are constantly hearing of leading Provincial Hospitals which are commencing to enforce the same term of service for their Probationary Nurses. It is admitted by all who are best able to judge, that the time is none too long to enable a woman to gain an accurate knowledge of the work, and it is clearly only a matter of time when the rule becomes of universal adoption.

But this necessity for a thorough, all-round training being premised for Nurses, as we have seen it is enforced for Doctors, let us first see how the question of specialism has been evolved in the Medical profession. It has naturally arisen from the ever enlarging boundaries of Medical science, that no one human brain could gain or keep adequate knowledge of all the advances made in every direction. Consequently, as we previously saw, there arose the sects of the Physicians, the Surgeons, and the Obstetricians. And now within modern times each one of these classes has been divided and sub-divided by reason of their members undertaking the special study of some one organ of the human body, or the special treatment of some one or more of the special diseases to which one of those organs are liable. Even with such a limited field before them there is enough, it is well known, to afford many a life-long work. And, on the other hand, there can be no reasonable doubt that humanity at large has been the gainer by this focussing of the whole concentration of thought and action by a scientific mind or skilled hand upon one subject. No one can doubt that the enormous advances in medical knowledge and in surgical dexterity, which have taken place within the last twenty years, and the vast saving of human life and alleviation of human suffering, which have been the necessary consequences, are largely, if not entirely, due to the aggregate discoveries, in theory and practice, made by specialists.

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THE brain can be trained just like the hand. This is the great object of education. An empty head is an evil head; an untrained brain is a mischievous brain. The brain must be used all round; and perhaps the greatest danger of school education at present is that the memory is cultivated principally or almost alone. It is not walking encyclopædias that do good in the world, but skilled brains able to think and not merely to remember.

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