

symptoms, observable only by close attention on the part of one skilled by long practice in their recognition, the knowledge of which helps the medical practitioner so materially in his diagnosis; who again would record for him the varying temperature, pulse, and respiration of his patient, give the cold bath or ice-pack ordered if the temperature reaches a certain point, watch assiduously through the long hours of the night, and carry out at short intervals the many details of the treatment ordered, if the trained nurse were not at hand? And the answer is, No one; for in serious cases the best intentioned people often do more harm than good by their unskilled efforts. Again when the case is a surgical one, it is the trained nurse who makes the elaborate preparations necessary before an operation can be performed with safety, upon whom the surgeon depends for the cleanliness of his instruments, the preparation of the patient, and for his subsequent care day and night. It is certain that many of the operations now successfully and constantly performed, could never be undertaken were the operating surgeon not confident that he could trust his patient in the hands of skilled nurses who would faithfully carry out his directions; and physicians and surgeons constantly and gratefully acknowledge their indebtedness to nurses for the services they render.

But there is another side to the question. If so much depends upon the skill of trained nurses, then, any failure on their part may, and probably will, be productive of serious results to both patient and medical practitioner.

We have been led to make these remarks because the complaint of a leading medical man has reached us that nurses have done him "professional injury" by their inefficient nursing of his cases. It is easy to understand that this may readily be the case. The lessons to be learnt are twofold: first, that as so much depends upon nurses, it behoves medical practitioners to help them to organise their profession, and to eliminate the unworthy and inefficient from its ranks, and meanwhile to see to it that they never employ a nurse who is not properly qualified; and, secondly, to recognize that when they do obtain the services of a thoroughly skilful, conscientious, and devoted nurse, her price is above rubies, and moreover that the services she renders have a distinct influence on their own professional prestige.

## Annotations.

### THE MIDWIFE QUESTION.

THE Duke of Devonshire received at the Privy Council Office, Whitehall, a deputation on Tuesday afternoon from the Association for Promoting the Compulsory Registration of Midwives. Considerably over 100 were present, among them being the Duke of Westminster, Mr. J. Heywood Johnstone, M.P., Lady Balfour of Burleigh, and Mrs. Wallace Bruce (representing the Association for Promoting Compulsory Registration of Midwives), the Rev. Arthur Peile (Master of St. Katherine's, representing Queen Victoria's Institute for Nurses), Dr. Bezly Thorne (Royal British Nurse's Association), Dr. Percy Boulton (London Obstetrical Society), Mrs. Henry Hobhouse (National Union of Women Workers), the Hon. Mrs. Alfred Lyttelton (Women's Liberal Unionist Association), Dr. C. J. Cullingworth, and numerous members of Parliament.

The deputation was introduced by Mr. J. Heywood Johnstone, who said those present regarded the subject as a most important one, as affecting particularly the welfare of women of the poorer class throughout the United Kingdom. A Select Committee of the House of Commons had expressed a very strong opinion on the subject, and at an important conference held at Westminster, a resolution had been passed expressing an unanimous opinion that the matter should be taken up by the Government, and a Bill passed dealing with the subject. It was true that a Bill had been introduced into the House of Commons, but it had not up to the present had a chance, and the deputation were desirous of impressing upon his Grace the great and urgent importance of the matter, and of asking him to bring the subject before the Cabinet during the coming autumn. Others also spoke in support of the objects aimed at by the deputation.

The Duke of Devonshire, in reply, congratulated them on the progress which the question appeared to have made since a deputation on the same subject waited upon him last year, and although his reply on that occasion might not have been regarded as altogether encouraging, it had resulted in a more complete communication between those most interested in the subject, the members of the medical profession and those local bodies who would necessarily be called upon to take an important

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