

departments of the Navy and Army. It is, of course, obvious that, in times of peace, the medical officers of the Services can and do obtain but little practical experience in the injuries and accidents inseparable from war; and that they not unnaturally, therefore, fail to keep in touch with the rapid progress of the science and the art of surgery. So if the stress of war should come, it might perhaps find some of the medical officers, upon whom the life or death of our wounded sailors and soldiers would depend, more or less unable to grapple efficiently with the duties which would then devolve upon them. It is a natural consequence of this fact, that the best class of medical practitioners should avoid the Services—if only in order to escape such professional stagnation.

But the point is specially interesting to us, as it will be to our readers, because of the sidelight which it throws upon the Nursing departments of the Services, and which we have, again and again, proved to be so badly organized and equipped that they are quite unfitted to meet the demands which would be thrown upon them, if war occurred. We earnestly hope that this latter matter will not be overlooked in the re-organization of the Medical department, which we trust will be speedily taken in hand and carried through upon a broad and liberal basis. Our sailors and soldiers deserve the best their country can provide them with, if only out of simple gratitude; but, as a matter of common sense, the provision made for the welfare of our defenders not only increases the efficiency but would actually diminish the present cost, of the Services to the nation.

THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER.

THE Berlin correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle* says: Professor Max Runge, the eminent authority on the diseases of women, has published an address which he delivered some time ago to the medical students of the University of Göttingen, on the position of women as gynæcologists. The address has created considerable stir in German medical circles, and especially among the leaders of the feminist movement. Professor Runge points out that as long as the treatment of their own diseases and the practice of midwifery remained in the hands of women absolutely no progress was made. Until the seventeenth century, obstetrics, for example, remained on

the same low level as among the Greeks and Romans. Even famous female gynæcologists like Lachappelle and others were content to carry on old traditions. They were industrious, zealous imitators, but with no initiative. All the epoch-marking improvements in these particular branches of medicine have been the work of men. In the seventeenth century, when men were more or less admitted to the care of female ailments, an improvement at once was discernible. The first vast step forward was the invention of the forceps, not the invention of a learned and experienced physician, but of a simple barber-surgeon. Hitherto, countless lives had been sacrificed for want of this simplest of instruments.

It is erroneous, says Professor Runge, to suppose that the lack of discernment and initiative in women doctors in the past is to be attributed to their faulty education. He quotes the instance of the University of Salerno, where women occupied chairs, and reminds his hearers that the greatest improvements in obstetrics were made when the general culture of men was not very pronounced. Besides, for centuries, women have had the teachings of nature to guide them. They have had practical and constant experience as their instructor. But they have not availed themselves of these lessons. Professor Runge asks, why is it that the feminist movement wishes to remove the treatment of female diseases from the hands of men? It cannot be because men have proved themselves unfit. The proud edifice of knowledge as it is to-day is the work of men's hands and brains. Is it to protect the feelings of modesty in women? The professor thinks only false feelings of shame are raised in a woman by visiting a male physician, and that these feelings of false modesty prevail most largely in countries where women have fewest rights and privileges. Is it also not a fact that a vast majority of women themselves, in cases of danger, prefer to be treated by a man? Women can never be responsible surgeons or physicians, says Professor Runge, in conclusion; but, nevertheless, they may have an assured position as the assistants of medical men, as his assistants, for example, in midwifery cases, and as nurses.

It would be interesting to hear what such eminent practitioners as Mrs. Garrett Anderson, M.D., and Mrs. Mary Scharlieb, M.D., have to say in reply to this truculent German Professor.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)