

### Annotations.

#### IN DEFENCE OF THE MEDICAL STUDENT.

THE medical student is just now being held up to opprobrium in the press in a way which appears to us so unjustifiable that we feel constrained to take up the cudgels in defence of of this genial, happy tempered, and hard working individual. After considerable experience of the genus we do not hesitate to say that the medical student will bear favourable comparison with any other class of young men of his standing, and in the whole of our nursing career from probationer to that of Matron, we have never met the snob so graphically depicted in the lay press as a typical medical student. This person "walks with a swinging sort of strut—with a lofty air as though he would wish the spectator to understand that he is in partnership with some great psychic force of nature," is "supercilious, haughty, too often ill-mannered and altogether undesirable." When a patient utters a moan of pain, he "smiles indulgently, or looks on with a sort of amused interest," or stares at an interesting case with "calm, insolent curiosity." So much for imagination. How many nurses, or patients for that matter, would recognise in this description the "boys" whose advent heralds the general brisking up of the ward, when the children are sure of a bit of fun, a smile comes to the faces of the careworn mothers, and the newspaper left on the bed testifies to a kindly thought for the male patient, as the student goes about his work, conscientiously, carefully, and with an utter absence of "side." If he occasionally exhibits a certain amount of animal spirits, what lad is there between nineteen and twenty-three, who is worth anything, who does not possess them. Would we have old heads on young shoulders? In all well regulated hospitals, where the patients' welfare is the first consideration, both as regards scientific treatment and nursing care, the exuberance of the student is kept well within bounds. If he "renders life in hospital anything but safe, and an intelligent treatment quite impossible—the great care of its leading surgeons, physicians, and excellent nurses notwithstanding," who is to blame, the institution or the students? But the supposition is preposterous. What "leading surgeon" or hospital committee would tolerate such a state of affairs for a moment?

At this time of year, more especially, a word

of appreciation of medical students on the part of nurses is more particularly appropriate and due. Who is so ready as he to devote personal service, time, and money (when he has any) in the service of the patients? Willingly he ascends ladders, nails up mottoes, fetches and carries, organizes entertainments, and personally superintends the removal of helpless patients to the scene of action. The nursing staff of our hospitals make great demands at this season of the year on the reserves of good nature, endurance, and talent possessed by the medical student. To his credit be it said he is never known to fail, and we believe that the patients would be the first to miss and regret the sunny atmosphere of youthful health and spirits brought into the wards by this much maligned person.

#### THE MISSION OF THE DOVE.

Since the days when Noah sent the dove out of the ark, when other messengers had failed him, and it returned to him bearing the olive branch, the symbol of the subsidence of the flood, its use as a messenger, both in peace and war, has been recognized, and its services to humanity have been noteworthy. The latest instance of the sagacity and stedfastness of this gentlest of birds occurred recently in New Zealand, when a message in triplicate was received, by Howie's Great Barrier Pigeon Service, from the Great Barrier (Tryphena) stating that an inhabitant of the island had smashed his arm with a rifle bullet from wrist to elbow, and that amputation immediately was necessary. A steamer was as soon as possible despatched to bring the patient to the mainland at considerable difficulty, in the teeth of a great gale, and the services of a medical man not being available a trained nurse was found willing to brave the storm to render all assistance in her power to the unfortunate patient. Four pigeons were sent off with the steamer for the use of the patient, nurse, or captain. The two birds which carried the message from the Barrier, were despatched in the face of a storm of wind and rain, and arrived in a very battered condition, and greatly exhausted. That they carried out the mission with which they were entrusted is a proof of the truth which is apt to be overlooked both with regard to human beings as well as to the dumb creation, that extreme gentleness may be combined with fortitude and pertinacity of purpose, constituting perhaps the highest form of courage.

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