

by the best result, is there not a danger that theory is overshadowing practice, is not too much time and mental energy bestowed on the study of obscure questions of anatomy and physiology to the detriment of securing that expert knowledge of ministering to the necessities of the patient, which is the characteristic of a good nurse? Is there not a danger that the great and important place given to theory in the curriculum and the examination may lead to a want of balance in the mind of the average student, leading her, when free from the etiquettes of the hospital ward, to mix up treatment with nursing, to forget the dignity of her own profession in criticising the methods of the medical attendant? These are very grave considerations, which require to be looked full in the face and considered. We do not want to make a race of spoilt medical students, but capable nurses, and for those who are drawn to seek the higher mysteries of the healer's art there should be opportunities found in a post-graduate course, or in entering the ranks of the medical profession. Out of this branch of the subject spring many others, such as the need of a central examining body independent of and above the training schools, a record office for the registration and filing of the certificates, all controlled by some form of governing body chosen by and forming part of the profession. Would it not somewhat clear the path from difficulties if some minimum curriculum were agreed on, representing the least possible for the efficient training of a sick nurse, suited to average intellects and average physique? We need ask for no legal authority to initiate these reforms, and when the time comes when we seek a legal recognition and protection of our status, we have a much stronger claim because we have made up our minds as to what we want, we go with a united front.

As a means to this end we might seek to raise our ideals, to get out of the spirit of money-grubbing and muck-raking for excitement; we want to awaken the spirit of self-sacrifice and self-discipline; the giving of one's best for another which is the highest of all woman's privileges; to emphasise the fact that sick nursing is one of the grand ministries of the world; to show the beauty of service. An ideal like this will enlarge the range of our vision, ennoble our methods, place us in a right attitude towards our patients, and shed a new light on our work and life.

Appointment.

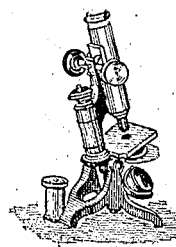
MATRON.

Miss Helen C. Vokins has been appointed Matron of the Cottage Hospital, Hanwell. She received her training at the Borough Hospital, Birkenhead, and has since been on the staff of the Dorset County Hospital.

Medical Matters.

By ALFRED EDDOWES, M.D., M.R.C.P.,
Physician to St. John's Hospital for Diseases of the Skin, London.

THE PARASITIC NATURE OF ECZEMA.



Two papers of unusual value on this subject have recently appeared in the "Monats. für Prakt. Dermatol." The first gave an account of experiments by which Drs. Bockhart, Bender, and Gerlach have proved that the toxins produced by the growth of staphylococci in broth cultures are capable of exciting eczema of the human skin apart from the presence of the staphylococci themselves. They further discovered that the contents of the bodies of the cocci alone produced suppurative diseases of the skin such as impetigo staphylogenes, boils; etc. To the poison produced outside the cocci they apply the term Staphylotoxin in contradistinction to that contained inside the bodies of the cocci for which they adopt the name Staphyloplasmin. They consider that they have established the remarkable fact that this so-called Staphyloplasmin has nothing to do with the production of eczema apart from the Staphylotoxin. Bockhart applies the term Staphylotoxin-Eczema to the condition so produced.

In the earlier experiments with the toxin, which is known to be very powerful, there were no serious constitutional effects produced, but Bockhart, by later inoculation experiments, succeeded in producing a papular eczema at the point of inoculation on his left upper arm and rather serious constitutional disturbance—sickness, head-ache, giddiness, cold perspiration and feeble action of the heart. When the culture-filtrate (the toxin) is merely rubbed on the skin, the mouths of some of the follicles become inflamed, showing that the follicles are the most vulnerable points in the skin surface.

After producing eczema by means of the active toxin, a piece of skin was excised, by Bockhart, and subjected to microscopic examination, the sections being stained by various methods, hæmatoxylin, carmine, methylene blue, etc. The appearances described are those seen in acute eczema.

Bockhart comes to the conclusion that eczema is an infective inflammation of the epidermis, and that the excitors of eczema are staphylococci. He thinks the condition is brought

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)