

Entomologists make use of cyanide to destroy insects without injuring their structure. It is one of the deadly poisons which, though not of medicinal value, is largely handled by people of various professions and trades, so that accidents are not likely to occur from overdoses in medicines, but from different causes.

The antidotes for it are much the same as in prussic-acid poisoning.

The action is very rapid, and while a doctor can hardly be expected to arrive in time to be of any use, there must not be one moment lost. The stomach must be emptied, if possible, and cold-water applied to spine and face.

Ammonia, to inhale, and artificial respiration must be tried, and kept up for some considerable time, as is always necessary when it is employed.

The Progress of State Registration of Trained Nurses.

The following letter from the President of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, Miss Louisa Stevenson, appeared in the *Scotsman* in a recent issue:—

Will you allow me to supplement a letter on this subject which you kindly inserted in the *Scotsman* some time ago? The need for an expert central authority to define the minimum course of training which a woman must undergo before she shall be entitled to acknowledgment as a qualified nurse is emphasised at the present time by the recently issued report of the English Local Government Board Departmental Committee on the nursing of the sick in workhouses. This report recommends that there shall be four well-defined grades in the nursing service—1, probationers; 2, qualified nurses; 3, trained nurses; and 4, superintendent nurses. My object in writing is to call attention to grade No. 2. The "qualified" nurses are to be women trained in a Minor School or small workhouse for one year, and certificated at the end of it. This I think a serious blot on an otherwise admirable effort to grapple with the difficulties of workhouse hospital nursing. Every expert knows that it is impossible for even the first principles of nursing to be learned in so short a time, and the public will certainly be entitled to regard a "qualified" nurse as equal, if not superior, to a trained nurse. The position even of the latter is at present undefined and chaotic, the good and the bad having precisely the same legal position. From communications received and from increasing experience I find that there is a widely spread opinion that so long as a nurse can produce a certificate showing that she has spent three years in a hospital, the public need not concern themselves as to what she learned when there. It is not realised that very many otherwise competent nurses leave their hospitals at the end of three or even four years certified as fully trained, with no knowledge of the nursing of infectious diseases, such as fever and diphtheria, except what they may have learned from books and from lectures. And yet the vital importance of skilled,

experienced nursing in such cases is acknowledged by all. Some nurses do go to a fever hospital at the end of their general training, but the custom is by no means universal.

Infectious diseases cannot, of course, be admitted to a general hospital where no separate fever department exists. There is, however, no reason why there should not be an affiliation of hospitals for educational purposes, each supplying what the others lack. The system exists in some American hospitals, and works perfectly well.

This Society exists for the express purpose of obtaining by Act of Parliament a Bill providing for the legal registration of trained nurses after examination by a competent central authority, corresponding in some respects to the General Medical Council, who would also define what the minimum curriculum of their training must be. Such legislation would not in any way interfere with the rights of anyone, if so minded, to employ women with little training or none. The general public at whose expense the hospitals are kept up would be able to discriminate between the competent and the incompetent by some other means than possible painful experience, and nursing would be raised to the status of a dignified profession.

PROGRESS IN THE UNITED STATES.

It is certain, says the *Surgical Clinic* of Chicago, that an attempt will be made at Springfield early in the session to legislate upon the training and registering of nurses. It is necessary that there shall be an intelligent basis upon which to frame a statute which the Supreme Court will approve of as constitutional. There is no doubt of the necessity of legislation to protect the community from imposture in a public interest.

Nurses who devote their time to this profession, and who bring to it attainments which have been won at considerable cost, are entitled to legal protection; and the community which reposes confidence in their diplomas is also entitled to protection. Education of trained nurses has improved with the improvement of medical education. Only those nurses should be entitled to State certificates who have had three years' training in a regularly organised nurses' school connected with a completely equipped hospital. A law of this nature is indispensable to separate the competent nurses from the multitude of incompetents now rushing forth from the spurious nurse-training schools which are not connected with hospitals and have no means of educating nurses.

A New York correspondent writes:—"Our State Bill (Registration) goes up in March. We are not at all sure of getting it through, for the doctors with commercial private hospitals are against it. . . . I sometimes think we ought to drop everything else and work for the vote!"

The same view has been expressed by thoughtful women in this country. There is no certainty that we shall retain anything we have gained without the security of the franchise.

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