

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD

EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 890.

SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 1905.

Vol. XXXIV.

Editorial.

THE VALUE OF MODERN NURSING.

The evidence given by Miss Lückes, Matron of the London Hospital, before the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the question of State Registration of Nurses, cannot fail to impress those who are acquainted with the value of modern nursing with her lack of appreciation of the supreme importance of the practical and delicate duties which a nurse is called upon to perform; while her deliberate attempt to induce the Committee to believe that because she receives a training for a period of three years, a nurse will be apt to regard herself as a pseudo-doctor, will, we believe, be condemned by registrationists and anti-registrationists alike.

Miss Lückes had the misfortune, when she was trained a quarter of a century ago, to miss the invaluable experience only to be obtained as Sister of a ward. The Sister is responsible to physicians or surgeons, as the case may be, for the exact and skilful carrying out of their directions as to the treatment of the sick. She is also responsible for training and practically teaching the probationers.

As to the danger of thoroughly trained nurses considering themselves able to assume the rôle of doctors, we have no hesitation in saying that it is simply visionary.

We unhesitatingly appeal to the medical staff of any well-organised training-school to state whether the highly trained sisters and nurses, upon whom they depend to nurse their most critical cases, ever exceed their special duties and assume those of the medical practitioner.

The cordial relations between the medical staff in a hospital and the responsible nursing officers in their wards are now proverbial, and any attempt to prove the contrary cannot be substantiated. Differences on points of discipline between the Matron and the medical staff may, on occasions, arise. Differences between the medical staff and those responsible for carry-

ing out their treatment in the wards are almost unknown.

The pseudo-scientific person, who has done so much harm to the good name of trained nurses, is to be found in the ranks of the half-trained and ignorant women, who, with that little knowledge which is such a dangerous thing, pose as trained nurses, do not hesitate to criticise the doctor and his methods of treatment, and to instil doubts as to his competence in the minds of his patients. The thoroughly-trained nurse is ever his loyal assistant. She is conscious of her skill, proud of her share in the world's work in her own department, and has no desire to exchange a position in which she ranks as an expert for one in which she can only take the position of a quack.

The main factor in raising professions, crafts and industries to their highest pinnacle of attainment has ever been the absorption of the worker in the work, and it is just this quality which has enabled nurses to accomplish such magnificent results in the last half century; so that nursing is no longer regarded as a suitable occupation for the unskilled, unsympathetic, callous, and ignorant, but is recognised as a worthy object for the life-long service of the highest type of women. Like the craftsmen of old, nurses in the past have lavished upon their work a love, devotion, and skill out of all proportion to the monetary reward they were likely to receive. With the spirit of the true artist, nothing less than the best which they could attain would suffice; and it is this spirit which must inspire all work which is individual rather than mechanical—if it is to make an abiding impression.

To belittle the value of their calling, to endeavour to persuade nurses that their technical qualifications are of secondary importance, is to endeavour to lower their ideals, with the inevitable result of lowering the quality of their work. Whether or not this was Miss Lückes' intention, we do not consider her evidence was of sufficient weight to attain this object.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)