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Editorial.

THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF MEDICINE AND NURSING.

"No branch of work shows in a prettier way the dependence of medicine for good results on nursing, or the necessity of rounding out the plans of men by the personal solicitude of women." — *American Journal of Nursing*.

In reporting the extension of the work of nurses in public schools, our contemporary, the *American Journal of Nursing*, makes the statement which stands at the head of this article. It supports this assertion by showing that the neglected children, formerly excluded from school by the medical inspectors, played on the street without treatment and lost their schooling as well. Now the practical details of their care are given into the hands of the school nurse. The result is that not only are the children excluded from school for the safety of the healthy, but active steps are taken to carry out the treatment which formerly was too often a dead letter, and that preventive and health missionary work have been fruitful in good results.

The effect of good nursing in this branch of work is strikingly apparent, but the same may be said of all cases of illness. On the one side, the physician or surgeon is necessary to diagnose the disease, and to prescribe and direct the treatment; on the other, the nurse, deft-handed and skilful to carry out that treatment; and without her help the most brilliant diagnosis, the most skilful surgery may fail to relieve the patient, for diagnosis must be followed by the application of treatment, and surgery and may be rendered worse than useless by careless or unskilful nursing.

Starting from the same basis, an elementary knowledge of the anatomy of the human body, of the laws of health and the variations from them which constitute disease, the two professions of medicine and nursing diverge. The studies of the student of medicine are directed along lines which are to make him proficient in matters of which a nurse has only an elementary knowledge, to evolve the man of science competent to treat the sick; brilliant is the success of many along these lines, and in no quarter does their work meet with greater admiration than from the trained nurse who knows the value of it. The education of the nurse, on the other hand, is directed to making her competent to give skilled care to the sick, to practically apply the medical treatment prescribed for the relief and comfort of the patient. Here she has a sphere of her own in which no one else can touch her.

Hence it is that the wise doctor prescribes as a part of his treatment the trained nurse, he appreciates the value of her work as she does his, and the two are so distinct that there is room for this mutual appreciation. The nurse who encroaches on the exclusive domain of the medical man as to diagnosis and treatment (which, be it noted, is extremely rare) ceases to be a skilled worker and becomes a quack. In the same way, did a medical man undertake nursing work his work would no longer be that of the member of a skilled profession but merely that of the amateur. Medicine and nursing are interdependent, indispensable for the all-round welfare of the patient, a fact which is recognised by the leaders of the medical profession.

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