

not surprised to discover that the writer, if he knows anything of the subject, has, at least, found himself obliged to feign the deepest ignorance, and failed even to cover the depth of that want of knowledge, by the thinnest possible crust of undoubted facts.

For example, "It cannot be too steadfastly affirmed that the business of a Nurse is to nurse. She must be able and willing to do that, whatever else she leaves undone. In every calling, culture and good manners have their advantages, and may add to the value of special qualifications, but they can never take the place of them." From this, it is argued that it is really quite unnecessary for a doctor to be a gentleman, to know anything of men, books, or manners, so long as he knows "all about health and disease, diagnosis and treatment, pills and powders, Nursing and feeding. These he must have at his fingers' end." It is kindly admitted that if, in addition to the preceding, "he be a scholar, a gentleman, and a man of the world, so much the better. But when it comes to the real management of disease, it is the man who understands his business who is placed in charge, even if it be Hutton the bonesetter!"

The ridiculous affectation underlying all this is too apparent for comment. We only call the attention of our readers to the estimate our would-be-medical contemporary holds of the social position and mental acquirements of physicians and surgeons. It is quite unnecessary to say that a doctor who was not "a gentleman and a man of the world" would rarely, or never, have the opportunity, now-a-days, of showing that he "understood his business," despite our contemporary's easily understood preference for "Hutton the bonesetter." There is not the smallest doubt, although our contemporary either does not, or will not understand it, that in treating and tending the sick, the manners and tact of Medical Men and Nurses are every whit as important factors to success, as knowledge of their "business." We can recall many Doctors and many Nurses who were well acquainted with their professional work, who still never succeeded in their practice, simply because their manner did not secure the implicit trust and confidence of their patients.

But to resume. Our contemporary considers that it is on the same reasoning quite immaterial whether a Nurse "drops her 'h's' or not, whether she is pretty or plain, whether her caps and aprons look charming or ugly, whether she has been bred in the drawing-room or the scullery"; an estimate of Nursing qualities and position which once more we commend to our readers' notice. But from this verbiage, and much more of the same sort, the article draws to its conclusions thus: "It seems certain that the more sober and far-seeing among

Matrons, Nurses, and Hospital Managers have by their own method of reasoning arrived at similar conclusions"—to those of the writer. This is mere egotistical ignorance. We probably hear considerably more than our contemporary of the real views, on this and other matters, held by members of the Medical and Nursing world, and speak, therefore, from a wider and more accurate knowledge.

But to quote only one incontrovertible fact. The British Nurses' Association was founded by the leaders of these professions in February last, with the expressed primary object of obtaining a system of General Registration for Nurses. We believe, that in the short six months that have since elapsed, nearly one thousand Nurses and Doctors have joined the Association. What does that extraordinary fact mean?—a success quite unprecedented in our memory of any similar Association. It directly and undoubtedly announces that, if, as it is frequently stated, there are 15,000 Nurses in the United Kingdom, one-fifteenth of the whole profession has in six months come forward, and openly expressed a wish for Legal Registration to be granted.

We have before us a List of the Honorary Officers and Executive Committee of the Association. We find that its President is a Daughter of our venerated Queen; that its Vice-Presidents consist of thirty-six leading, and most representative, Physicians and Surgeons in the Metropolis, the Provinces, Scotland, and Ireland; that, besides the Dukes of Abercorn and St. Alban's, Sir Sydney Waterlow, the best known, shrewdest, and most successful of "Hospital Managers" is a Trustee.

So much, then, for "the sober and far-seeing Nurses and Hospital Managers." But how about the Matrons—the leaders of the Nursing profession. We find the heads of seven out of the twelve general Hospitals of London, and several of the largest County, Scotch and Irish, Hospitals, are members of the Executive Committee, and believe that, besides these, one hundred Matrons of Hospitals are acting on the General Council which controls the Association. We ask then where are the "sober and far-seeing Matrons," who are holding aloof from this great and wonderfully successful movement? We call upon our contemporary to name them. We challenge our contemporary to name them; and then we will revert to the question of their sobriety and far-sightedness. We need only notice one more and most characteristic feature of the article we have been considering. After devoting about one hundred and fifty lines to complete disapproval of a General Register for Nurses, it concludes that, "if in the course of years it should be found that the general

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)