

Private Nurses. My experience and observation is, that for nine out of twelve cases a woman of, or just above, the class of superior upper servants, makes the best Nurse for private work. I agree with Miss de Pledge's view, that an educational standard as a test for a woman's capabilities for the profession of Nurse is worse than useless; but a minimum of education should be required, and no applicant received for trial who is not able to pass fairly well in the ordinary branches of English; were we to require French and Latin, we would eliminate a class who are, I think, most valuable, especially for private Nursing.

It would be a great boon to Matrons to be rid of half their applicants. Examinations, however, will not reduce their number; on the contrary, it will let loose upon us a flood of young women who will think, because they pass a preliminary examination, they are certain to become good Nurses. The plea that it is a great saving of work and time for a Probationer to have theoretical knowledge before she enters the ward is, I venture to think, mistaken. An earnest, thoughtful woman has to undergo a severe strain on entering a Hospital ward, and I would rather advocate that Probationers should have shorter ward hours during their first six or nine months in order to relax the nerve strain, and give them book work as a variety. Change of work is a good rest.

To conclude, I would answer the question which constitutes your heading thus:—Given an able-bodied young woman, of high moral character, and sound healthy constitution, convinced of her own vocation to nurse the sick, of any social class, let her be examined in—(1.) Reading, writing, composition (spelling), simple arithmetic, geography, history and English literature—*i.e.*, the education of every child. (2) In practical house-work; to include a knowledge of washing, cooking, house-cleaning, and plain needlework. Let the Lady Superintendent examine her personal fitness, judging of her aims and ideas, her quietness of voice, and restraint of manner. She should examine most particularly *somebody else* as to the applicant's powers of self-control and earnestness of character. If the candidate passes all these tests satisfactorily, she should be advised to employ her time of waiting for a vacancy, in reading carefully a simple physiology handbook, some good nursing manual, and in making herself familiar with medicine weights and measures, the reading of thermometers, &c. Were *all* Probationers so chosen, my belief is there would soon be a vast increase of much-needed earnestness in the work, and we would have fewer of that miserable type of Nurse exposed lately by a writer in one of the reviews. The meaning of all education is, surely, the development, to a greater or lesser extent, of the capacity for assimilating knowledge whenever and howsoever it be presented to the mind; but the mere possession of knowledge, as shown in an examination, can be no measure of the candidate's fitness to acquire the many and varied details of knowledge, both of man and matter, required by a good trained Nurse. I, therefore, enter my plea for a very small amount of what I may call Educational Examination, and a very wide and exhaustive examination of character and motive, not only before admission, but by Matron and Sister during the first month or months of trial work.—I am, Madam, faithfully yours,

E. J. R. LANDALE.

Edinburgh, 21st Feb., 1894.

## Medical Matters.

### WATER IN TYPHOID FEVER.



A French contemporary has recently published an interesting series of cases of typhoid fever which were treated by the administration of large quantities of water. The author points out that the first object of treatment in this disease is, or should be, naturally designed to destroy the micro-organisms which are the exciting causes of the disease; or, if that cannot be done, to neutralise the effects of their presence in the blood. On the ground that the kidneys are believed to excrete the poisonous products in typhoid fever, and that in most cases of the disease the urine is much diminished in quantity, while the skin does not act as it should do, the assumption was that a larger quantity of water should be imbibed in order to obtain increased renal and cutaneous action. As the results of the treatment in fourteen cases, one of which died, it was found that the patients not only did well, but that their comfort appeared to be increased; the mouth became moist, and the trouble in swallowing due to dryness of the fauces disappeared; the stomach tolerated the treatment well, and the diarrhoea was not increased. It is stated that as much as 16 litres (about 28 pints) of water were, in exceptional cases, taken during the day; the water was quickly excreted, and the patient appeared in every case to derive benefit from the treatment.

### VINEGAR IN CHLOROFORM SICKNESS.

It has been accidentally discovered that vinegar is an excellent remedy for the after-effects of chloroform. The method adopted was to place a compress saturated with vinegar over the nose of the patient as soon as the operation was completed, and to keep this there until consciousness was recovered, or even longer if necessary. We gather that the remedy was not used internally, but the effect appears to have been very striking in the 30 cases in which it was employed; because it is stated that not only was the nausea and vomiting relieved, but also the distressing headache, which is so common, if not invariable, after much of the anæsthetic has been taken. This is the more surprising, considering that 10 of the patients had been under the influence of chloroform for more than an hour, and three of them had previously taken it, and had suffered greatly from its after-effects. Some of the patients were able to drink, and even to take small quantities of food,

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