

Dr. PARKES, the Medical Officer of Health, further reported:—"My Lords and Gentlemen,—I have received two letters from persons who state that their wives had died consequent upon operations performed in this Hospital. In the first letter it is stated that the writer's wife underwent three operations without his consent. In the second letter it is also stated that the writer's wife underwent an operation, without his consent being asked, at the end of June, 1893, and that she died on August 5th. The certificate of death in this case stated that the cause was endocarditis (heart disease), and septicæmia (blood poisoning) six days, and is included in my report as a death from septicæmia unconnected with operation. I have also had an interview with a lady, who alleges that she was operated on at the Hospital in November, 1892, but that a different operation was performed to that to which she had given her consent, and she is informed by her private medical attendant, that her health has been worse since the operation. I think it my duty to lay before the Vestry the allegations contained in these statements, which were totally unsolicited, and which are undoubtedly *bonâ fide*, but of course I can express no opinion as to the truth or otherwise of the allegations."

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Mr. HILTON moved that copies of the report just read by the Medical Officer of Health be sent to the Local Government Board and to the Home Secretary. This motion was seconded by Mr. IRONS. It was also proposed and seconded that copies of Dr. LOUIS PARKES' report be sent to the members of Parliament for the district, with a request that the matter be brought before the attention of the House of Commons.

The Nurse=Assistant.

THERE is a strong and deeply-rooted prejudice in every trade and calling against unskilled labour. The duly qualified professional, and even the apprentice, looks down upon it with disdain. Why is this? "Because professionals are jealous," say the amateurs, "because we turn out work as well and better done than theirs." Is this true, in the first place? Will amateur work in the aggregate compare with that of the professional or skilled artizan? We think not. There is no doubt that A. and B., who work only by the light of nature, may be superior in some respects to C. and D., who, in spite of lengthy training, are extremely stupid. But this proves nothing.

Granted, however, some jealousy, let us see to what extent and with what reason it exists. First, in how many branches of life's work do we find this kind of feeling, and from what does it proceed? The soldier and the volunteer, the sailor and the yachtsman, the parson and the local preacher, are all instances of the

professional and amateur. To descend lower, we have the bricklayer and his "labourer," the gardener and the "villa jobber," even the chimney-sweep, who looks down with scorn upon the man "what hasn't had no training, don't yer see." The young doctor, too, in country places, finds not unfrequently the unauthorised assistant or dispenser of his aged brother medico taking his place at bedsides. Perhaps, the man may have been the errand boy in former years, "who has picked up something of drugs." So he, too, gives prescriptions and attends cases, assisted sometimes by the local bone-setter. And the Hospital-trained Nurse; has she no rival? No imitation, which is the sincerest form of flattery? Of course she has, and will have more and more, as attention becomes drawn to her vocation. She need not fear their rivalry, any more than the skilled artizan need fear the man who can put up a shelf or two. They are both useful in their way, but they need never clash; for their work is not—and cannot be—the same.

To pursue the simile a little further. Do we not find that the best soldiers are now the readiest to uphold the honest and hard-working volunteer? A few years ago, the citizen-soldier was a "dog-shooter"; spoken of by military men with a pitying and rather sour smile. What is it that has changed their feeling towards him? Simply this. No longer with the faults of a young movement do the volunteers try to imitate the merely outside aspect of another branch of service. They pursue now, with real and careful effort, their own important *raison d'être*. They become proficient marksmen in many cases, and attend closely to their drill; earning the heartfelt approbation of the regulars. The yachtsman, too, who has studied hard and passed in seamanship, is noted and received in naval circles with the honour due to him. He does not chew tobacco now, or fill his mouth with swelling words. His blue coat and brass buttons are not his greatest pride.

In every rank of life there are three grades: the highest, the lower, and the *residuum*. To many, who have passed the time of youth, all prospect of attaining to the first is gone. They must let that alone for ever. Yet they feel a great desire, and often show considerable aptitude, for some special work. Instead of occupying their time with a poor and worthless imitation, can they not qualify themselves to fill a useful and subordinate position?

To take especially the case of Nursing. Are there not many women who, from choice and inclination, have a real talent for this useful work? To be a trained Nurse, however, needs years of careful preparation and instruction, beginning mostly at the age of five-and-twenty. For this, their chance is gone. Perhaps, after long years of patient isolation, the last parent has been laid to rest, the old home is broken up, and a trifling income with an empty life is left. Looking about dimly for an occupation, such an one thinks the long familiar work of Nursing would be most natural to her. Probably, she is quite right. Experience has taught her many useful lessons. She may improve herself also by attending Nursing Lectures, Ambulance Classes, and such-like. But she will not become a Trained Nurse. She should not attempt even, by a long water-proof and dark-blue dress, to ape one. If opportunity occurs, some months spent in a Nursing Sisterhood or kindred

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