

managed entirely by nurses and medical men. They are the only people who, from daily and hourly acquaintance with the work and wants of Nurses, are able to appreciate the measures which are necessary for consolidating and improving the profession. It will be an evil day for Nurses—if it ever comes—when the principle is asserted, far less granted, that any uninitiated layman should be allowed to take a prominent part in shaping or controlling the work and organisation of the Association, because it would inevitably mean disaster, if not a complete collapse of the whole body; and, certainly would break down instantly the cardinal principle alluded to—that no one should be permitted to control the Nursing profession except doctors and nurses.

We are led to make these remarks because we have recently received a considerable number of communications from Nurses all expressing the view that greater opportunities are needed, at this critical period of the history of Nursing, than exist at present, for the open and unfettered discussion of professional matters. There appears to be a somewhat widespread belief—which we deeply regret, and which we cannot but think is founded upon some misapprehension—that it is difficult, if not impossible, for the members of the profession to adequately discuss questions in which they are interested. We would venture, however, to point out that even if there is no other journal which is willing or able to afford such facilities, the views of Nurses on Nursing questions are always gladly welcomed by the NURSING RECORD, and are always afforded space in these columns without favour or personal bias.

Such a feeling as that to which allusion has been made may perhaps, to some extent, have actuated those well-known Nurses who have founded the Matrons' Council, for these ladies are well aware that although the views they entertain and express, from direct personal knowledge and experience of Nurses, are, of course, invariably received with appreciation, if not with agreement, by their own particular Hospital Committees, yet that hitherto they have had very little opportunity of direct fellowship and union with the Superintendents of other Institutions; and the chief benefit of the Matrons' Council will, perhaps, consist in the greater possibilities which will be thereby afforded to Matrons of taking counsel together upon personal and domestic matters.

And thus it is probable that the Matrons' Council will not only exercise a great influence in promoting the self-government of the Nursing profession far beyond that which was anticipated by those who originally proposed the scheme, but that it will also afford the opportunity, which many appear to desire, of a wider discussion of professional subjects.

SELF-MEDICATION.

There appears to be a perfect craze at the present moment amongst the public for the consumption of Tabloids. Within the last week, the writer has been consulted by two patients, who informed him that, like many others of their class, they had been recommended to take tablets of thyroid extract in order to reduce a disposition to obesity. Both patients suffered from nerve symptoms, and at the same time both had increased very considerably in weight during the time they had pursued the treatment. In both cases, they had been recommended to adopt it by chemists, and as might be expected, in both cases, they were somewhat disappointed at the results which they had achieved. Now this opens up several questions which are of considerable medical and ethical importance. In the first place, there is no excuse for chemists—who are qualified to dispense medicines, but who certainly have no qualifications to accurately prescribe them—undertaking to treat patients in this manner. Instead of carrying out the duties which they are legally qualified to fulfil, such men degrade themselves to the level of irresponsible quacks, and are therefore degrading their calling, while obtaining money from the public, practically under false pretences. In the next place, the public should realize that a drug to be of any value at all must possess some marked effect upon the organs of the body, and must therefore influence the condition of the tissues for good or evil. To play with such potent remedies is to play with edged tools; and a very familiar proverb restricts two classes of the community, at any rate, from this amusement. Extracts prepared from the thyroid gland have been proved beyond the shadow of a doubt to have the most powerful effect upon the human constitution in disease; and it is therefore, on the face of it, probable that this result will be accentuated if the body be healthy. It has been found that the remedy has a most distinct effect upon the nervous system, and, if there be no disease to counteract, it is in accordance with experience to suppose that the effect will be less qualified and therefore more powerful. We would not refer to this matter at this length, were it not for the fact that, as we have said, there appears to be at present a sort of monomania for such self-medication. The editor of a weekly journal, recently, naively recounted in its columns how she and her husband feeling out of sorts, and, finding themselves becoming fatter, determined to try this treatment on their own account. To quote her own simple description, the result was that she felt as though she was going to die, and was only afraid she wouldn't. And, apparently, her nervous system remained in a more or less shattered condition for some time; while her husband, sad to relate, appears positively to have been affected to a less extent, so far as his nervous system went, but to have developed a greater increase of adipose tissue. This lady's experiences, apparently, have cured her from dabbling in drugs on her own account, in future; and they, probably, will not be without a useful effect in impressing the necessity of similar caution upon the readers of her paper. But when a person of undoubted ability and intellectual acquirements acts in such a manner, how common the practice of self-vivisection may have become, amongst persons possessed of a smaller modicum of brains.

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