

than can be gained by a usurping fashion. The meaning is entirely gone. The casual wearer may be anyone—no merely innocent masquerader, not even the glorified jackdaw of the fable, a namely attraction only, a person void of personality, perhaps not insignificant, but certainly, in the indications of her clothing, unreliable. It is to be hoped, for the credit and continued usefulness of a class representative of the highest womanhood, and not less for our common security against a mischievous deception, that every means which public sense can employ will be used to baffle this new stratagem of thoughtless or unscrupulous fancy.”

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THE Nursing profession is considered to be a “very present refuge in time of trouble,” and a calling for which no particular aptitude is necessary. It is regarded frequently as the resource of the widow, the orphan, the ambitious nursemaid, and decayed gentlewoman in general. A musical lady verging towards middle-age, who has set her affections upon a promising young gentleman whose worldly possessions, it is believed, can easily be packed into an ordinary portmanteau, was recently heard to formulate her plans for the future, with a confident self-satisfaction that left no room for failure. “You see,” she said, “when Dick and I are married, we shall open a Nursing Home, and we can live very comfortably on that.” “But,” objected one of her listeners, “who will do the Nursing? I believe you have had no training.” “Oh!” she said, “I have had no training, but my playing and singing to the patients will be quite enough to make the ‘home’ a success.” The soothing powers of music are well known, but it is very doubtful whether surgeons will trust to a well-rendered Sonata of Chopin, or an air from “Il Trovatore,” to satisfactorily heal a colotomy; or whether a physician will consider that a typhoid patient can be satisfactorily nursed and dieted on harmonies and symphonies.

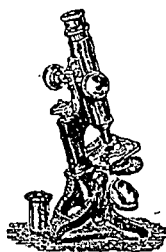
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It has been frequently pointed out in these columns that the popular beliefs as to Hospitals, and as to the motives of women who enter them as Nurses, are apt to be peculiar. A very clever lawyer, who on retirement from active legal work was appointed a J.P., elected a County Councillor, and appointed Chairman of the School Board, has, clearly not brought his faculties to bear upon the question of Nursing. On other subjects he is well calculated to give sound, sensible advice to all who apply; but he must not be approached by any young woman ambitious of becoming a Probationer. His second daughter, an energetic, capable young lady who had proved an invaluable district worker and Sunday-school teacher, became fired with the enthusiasm of becoming a Nurse, and took an early opportunity of confiding her ambition to her father. But he was inexorable. Neither tears, arguments or entreaties, were available to remove the rock of prejudice he placed before the portals of his heart. “I will never consent,” he said, “and during my

lifetime I shall expect my daughter to respect my wishes.” No reason for his decision could be obtained, and for some weeks the family circle entertained themselves with surmises as to his persistence. Finally the wife of his bosom undertook to find the “reason why,” which he disclosed in one terrible sentence:—“My dear, I could never allow it to be suspected that a daughter of mine was ‘crossed in love,’ and for what other reason could she wish to enter a Hospital!”

Medical Matters.

ANTISEPTICS IN MIDWIFERY.



An important paper was published, last month, in a French contemporary upon this subject, chiefly in view of legislation concerning midwives. It draws attention to the fact that puerperal infection is almost invariably transmitted by direct contact of the genital tract with a virus conveyed by the hands or instruments; the poison being conveyed from some other puerperal patient in the great majority of cases, but also being communicable from cases of erysipelas or of other infectious fevers. The authors of the paper consider that the atmosphere, except in very rare cases, has no influence as an infecting agent. They consider that elevation of temperature is the first and most important sign of infection, and upon every ground they consider it essential, that perfect cleanliness of all the linen and utensils used for the patient, with disinfection of the hands of the attendant and of all instruments that are used, should be most carefully carried out.

MASSAGE.

An American contemporary recently published a valuable paper showing the effect of massage upon the number and quality of the red blood corpuscles, based upon careful examinations of the blood in thirty cases. In each, the massage was administered for at least an hour. In nearly every case there was a marked increase in the number of the red blood corpuscles after the massage was completed, and the writer suggests that so immediate an increase could not represent the new formation of these cells merely as a direct result of the passive movements, but may have been caused through the massage of the muscles bringing a number of red blood corpuscles into the circulation, which had previously been dispersed in various tissues of the body. It appears that the hæmoglobin is not increased to a corresponding extent, so that it seems reasonable to believe that the theory of the writer is correct.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)