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Editorial.

NURSING ASSISTANTS.-I.

CURIOUS, but not altogether unexpected, development seems to be about to take place in the Nursing Profession. The opinion is being expressed by many medical men that Nurses are, on the one hand, undertaking a large part of the Hospital ward work which should be done by students in the Medical Schools; and, on the other hand, that, in after-practice, the Nurse is doing for the patient many things which the old-fashioned medical practitioner used to do. There is undoubtedly, much force in both these arguments, and it is important, therefore, that such facts, and their inevitable results, should be carefully considered.

If we look back to see how the present state of affairs has arisen, we are struck at once with the indisputable fact that the advent of educated women, in the shape of Probationers and Staff Nurses, into the General Hospitals, quickly led to a practical revolution in the work of their wards. Twenty years ago, for example, the clinical clerks invariably took the temperatures and the pulses of the patients, and charted these both morning and evening as part of their routine duty. They always gave hypodermic injections; in many cases they administered nutritive, stimulant, and even ordinary, enemata; they applied blisters and plasters, just as their predecessors had applied setons, and their pre-

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