

antiseptic purifying the whole atmosphere. Therefore I consider the presence of the nuns such a blessing and boon that their loss to the hospital would be a great calamity. But it would be a calamity greater still if the nuns were led to believe that their continuance in the Hospital was dependent on the employment of none but paupers to do the manual work of 'Nursing,' and if the injustice of inhumanity of pauper 'Nursing' were to be thereby prolonged."

AMERICA, progressive in all things, is progressive in this also, that the Sisters of Religious Communities work side by side with lay Probationers, and win their diplomas in the same way. Well done, America. In the old country it dawns on us more slowly that a knowledge of nursing is not donned with the religious habit, and there are still people who tacitly assume that because a woman is a religious she is a suitable head for a ward, with very little further qualification. The NURSING RECORD has always held that a three years' training is a minimum one for a fully qualified nurse. Sisters after all are but human, and there is no royal road to nursing. They must travel by the same way as other folk if they wish to attain the same end. That some Sisters have done splendid nursing work is beyond all question, but they are those who have qualified themselves for it. Religious Communities are proverbially conservative, and move on but slowly. When once those in authority amongst them have grasped the strides that nursing has made in the last ten years, and what is now required of nurses, they will probably insist that only those Sisters shall be allowed to nurse who hold the Certificate of a Hospital of repute.

But why should not the Committees of Hospitals help on this "consummation devoutly to be wished" by requiring the nursing credentials of each Sister whom they appoint to the charge of a ward. If a lay person were appointed with no inquiry into these, the General Committee of the Hospital surely would think that the Nursing Committee had neglected its duty, and would promptly replace it by another, but somehow Sisters come, and Sisters go, another face appears in the same habit, and whether the owner of the face has had three years' training, or one, or none, never seems to be a matter which is inquired into.

And those same habits—black and woolly—how are they compatible with aseptic surgery? No doubt some Sisters have them washed frequently, and no doubt many don't. But why not abolish them, and replace them by others of some grey, or white, material, washable and trainless? Secular ward Sisters are fast dis-

carding their cashmeres and merinos for the humbler but hygienic washing drill. Even the Royal Blue of St. Bartholomew's has disappeared. Why should not religious Sisters follow in their wake? There surely can be but one answer—Why not, indeed?

Our foreign letter in another column shows that it has been found possible for religious Sisters and secular Nurses to work side by side in precisely the same manner for a common diploma. The experiment in New Orleans seems to have proved a complete success, and it would probably be the same at home. Indeed, if a certain number of religious Sisters were admitted to our Hospitals, and went through their three years' training in them, it would probably be beneficial to religious and seculars alike. The presence in the wards of religious Sisters, and the daily example of women wholly consecrated to the highest service, must prove a stimulating influence to their fellow Nurses, and infuse into the lives of many an element of earnestness and devotion to duty which we are in some danger of losing in these days of much cycling, tennis playing, and golfing, while the Sisters themselves would gain the thorough professional training which would qualify those amongst them who showed a special aptitude, for holding high positions in the nursing world. The day is probably not far distant when no one, whether religious or secular, will be considered eligible for a post of responsibility who cannot produce a three years' certificate, it is to be hoped, therefore, that religious communities will realise this, and the fact that as the science of nursing has made giant strides in the last ten years, it is necessary to move on in order to keep abreast with the times.

It seems that the nurses in Melbourne are not altogether overpowered with the honour done them by the wife of the Governor-General, Lady Brassey, in inviting them to what are known in this country as "beast parties," or *omnium gatherum*. A short time ago they shared her hospitality with the ship stewards. The *Age* describes their last entertainment as follows:—

"Lady Brassey, whose efforts to practically stimulate general interest in the care and well-being of the blind have been so signally successful, has also shown sympathetic feeling towards the hard-worked Hospital Nurses and the decayed pioneers of the colony. On Wednesday afternoon her ladyship entertained at tea the inmates of the Old Colonists' Home and the Nurses of the Melbourne Hospitals and Convalescent Homes."

Our correspondent pathetically remarks that nurses see so much "decay" in their work that they do not care to meet it when off duty.

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