

trained nurses, and that their remarks display, therefore, the most palpable innocence of the nursing matters they profess to discuss. Ignorance is the most charitable excuse for impudence. The letter in question is so foolish that it requires but little comment. It gravely states, however, that there is a question whether Her Royal Highness Princess Christian or Mrs. Bedford Fenwick is to be President of the Royal British Nurses' Association—the mere suggestion of which is a gross disrespect to Her Royal Highness. We are not surprised to find it in the columns of the *Hospital*, which years ago described the members of the Association—of which Her Royal Highness was, is, and we hope long will be, President—as “women of pseudo-respectability, and the scum of the nursing profession,” and the editor of which—Sir Henry Burdett—asserted on oath before a Select Committee of the House of Lords, that some woman was discharged from her hospital “for having in her possession the property of a probationer, and her certificate was refused, and now she goes out as a trained nurse with Princess Christian’s name as her authority for what she does. I consider that to be a very great evil, and so do nurses’ training schools.” It is needless to say that this statement was absolutely untrue. Those who, like ourselves, value the great work which Her Royal Highness did for the Nursing profession in the formation of the Nurses’ Corporation, most deeply regret the manner in which Her Royal Highness’s name is invoked by the officials of the Association and their friends, whenever they are proved to be acting illegally. We regard such conduct as both cowardly and disloyal. As regards “Nurse Louisa East,” we believe that we are correct in saying that she has never had any hospital training at all, and that she only became a member of the Association in the period of grace, in consequence of the fact that she was then the matron-housekeeper of a special hospital. The utter absurdity of this person being dubbed a “nurse” is only equalled by the idea that her views on nursing matters could be expected to carry the slightest professional weight.

PATIENTS v. CASES.

NURSES who, in the discharge of their duties, come in daily contact with patients who are about to undergo serious operations

need, we think, to remind themselves from time to time of the personality and the natural feelings of these same patients, lest they become to some extent indifferent and unsympathetic. It is so easy to think of Nos. 6, and 9, and 10, for instance, who, the night report says, are to be prepared for operations, just as “cases.” In the rush of the early morning work, it not unfrequently happens that, though the nursing details are scrupulously carried out, and the cleanliness and “smartness,” which it is the pride of a good surgical nurse to insure, are attended to, the mental condition of the patient escapes consideration. And yet, setting aside the human aspect of the question, even from a purely professional point of view, the perturbed mental condition, and the natural and inevitable shrinking from the knife, demand consideration and sympathy. A few quiet words from a nurse whom the patient has learnt to trust and respect may “slow down” the action of an over-rapidly beating heart, and, in consequence, act with distinct therapeutic benefit, while the fact that the busy nurse, with her hands full of almost more work than she knows how to get through, has had sufficient sympathy to pause and consider the feelings of her patient, cannot fail to awaken a sense of gratitude, even in the mind of one usually irresponsible, and to beget a sense of confidence which will stand the nurse in good stead in the hand-to-hand struggle with death which, it may be, will soon be fought over the bed of the same patient. Nurses are but human, and in common with others of their kind, are sufficiently unimaginative to find it difficult to sympathise heartily with a condition which they have never experienced, and perhaps it is impossible to those who have always possessed great vitality, and robust health, to understand perfectly the feelings of a person who is desperately ill, but at least they can make the effort. Those nurses who have had serious illnesses themselves, will agree that they have thereby gained a faculty of insight into the minds of their patients which it is almost impossible to attain in any other way, and they will prize the experience so acquired as one of their most valuable possessions. With those who perhaps form the larger part of the nursing profession, who have not had this experience, sympathy and imagination may do much, and the application of the golden rule will carry them

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