

Refinement.

THE advance in the methods and perfection of scientific nursing, which the introduction of educated women into the nursing profession has brought about, is little short of marvellous; but, side by side with the raising of the standard of nursing is another advancement, of great, if not equal importance. It is not surprising that, in former years, parents shrank from allowing their carefully brought up daughters to enter upon a nursing career, when their work in the wards entailed their seeing and hearing things unnecessarily coarse and disgusting. It was not uncommon, for instance, even ten years ago, for a surgeon to throw back the bed clothes, and expose a male patient, with a group of students standing round the bed, upon the other side of which stood the ward sister, and, may be, a young probationer; and, for the very reason that gentlewomen naturally objected to such immodesty, it has been held by some medical men that ladies are out of place in hospital wards. This is far from being the case. The more refined and highly bred the woman, the more naturally does she perform any duty which comes before her in connection with her patients, but also the more strongly does she object, and show her repulsion, to unnecessary coarseness. The advent of gentlewomen into our hospitals has been an unmixed good, inasmuch as they have steadfastly set their faces to perform their duties decently and in order, and their determined attitude in this respect has had a marked influence upon the manners of recent generations of students, as well as upon the patients themselves. Even those medical men who, accustomed to the former order of things, were at first inclined to resent the introduction of "fads," now frequently are heard to say to a newcomer, "Wait a moment, sister likes so and so." For the sister, if she be a woman of tact and discretion, is sure eventually of the hearty support and co-operation of the visiting surgeon in her efforts to secure nicety and refinement in her work.

Again, if on some especially exasperating occasion, a medical man lets drop a stronger word than usual in the presence of a sister, his immediate apology, "I beg your pardon, sister; I forgot you would not like it," is an excellent lesson to the patients, who quickly adopt the general tone of the ward as their own for the time being at least. The consequence is that it is the rarest possible thing at the present day to hear a bad word, a coarse joke, or an unseemly song, in a hospital ward, and should any newcomer transgress, the nurses may be quite sure that no reprimand will be required from them, for his "mates" will at once make the offender feel the impropriety of his conduct.

The influence of this refinement in our hospital wards is difficult to estimate. Certain it is, it is

wide and far reaching. Lying in bed, with plenty of time for observation and for thought, the men and women who enter our hospitals, have an opportunity of considering and revising their own lives. Many of them—all honour to them—do, in the face of enormous difficulties—the necessary result of high rents, of no play-grounds for their children but the streets, and of the labour entailed to secure cleanliness—succeed in bringing up their families clean and pure, physically and morally. To these a time of inaction in a well ordered hospital ward, where they see carried out before them, with no labour to themselves, the details of cleanliness, and refinement, which they gain at the cost only of so much hard work in their own homes, must be a real rest and refreshment. To others, alas, whose lives have been more careless, the experience can be productive of nothing but good, and we may hope that the habits of self-restraint, cleanliness, and order learnt during the time spent in hospital, are in many cases not forgotten, but that the homes of the patients are the better, and the happier for the lessons they have learnt, and the standard which they have, often unconsciously, adopted when brought under the influence of refined and educated gentlewomen.

Nursing Politics.

OF the making of Midwives Bills there is no end. There are already three under immediate consideration. The Bill before Parliament drafted by the Association for promoting the Compulsory Registration of Midwives; the Bill of the Parliamentary Bills Committee of the British Medical Association; and Dr. McCook Weir's Sick and Obstetric Nurses Bill.

At the meeting of the special Sub-Committee of the Parliamentary Bills Committee, which was held on February 25th, the Midwives Registration Bill and the Obstetric Nurses Bill were under consideration. It was resolved to summon a special meeting of the Parliamentary Bills Committee on Friday, March 18th, at 5 p.m., in order that the matter may then be further considered and means concerted for bringing the views of the profession under the notice of Parliament in a suitable form.

At a late meeting of the Incorporated Medical Practitioners' Association, Mr. Brown, Direct Representative on the General Medical Council, made a statement respecting the Midwives Registration Bill now before Parliament, and referred to the alternative measure adopted by the Parliamentary Bills Committee of

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