

16 years. A celebrated Consulting Physician was called in, and cancer of the stomach was diagnosed. The symptoms did not improve; then, quite unknown to the Practitioner, the nurse told the friends that her long experience had taught her that this was a case of hysteria, and that the patient should be made to eat and to walk about, that she really did not feel pain, that the Doctors were quite mistaken, and, in fact, the usual well-known story. The friends, discouraged by the gloomy prognosis and by the progressive weakness of the patient, and eager to grasp at anything which offered a chance of saving a very dear member of the family, consented to the treatment being tried, the Doctor being kept in ignorance. The result was, of course, disastrous, the patient was put to great suffering, her life was probably shortened, the friends are torn with grief and remorse that their actions were considered cruel by the patient, the nurse took herself off, and the Doctor is filled with distrust of a class, while, perhaps, his resentment should only apply to the individual.

Incidents such as this could be multiplied indefinitely, and there must be some reason for such behaviour. In my opinion, the fault is one of education. The position of the nurse to the Medical Man is not explained to her. She is apt to regard herself as the guardian angel of the Patient, and to consider the Doctor as a rather unnecessary appanage to a sick-room, and as one whose orders with regard to medicines, should be carried out in proportion as the mixtures resemble those given at the Hospital where she was trained, to apparently similar cases; whose directions as to food and other matters are much more subject to her own discretion, and that, on the whole, the Medical Man is a convenient thing to have about a house if he will not meddle with the patient and will content himself with signing the death certificate.

The General Practitioner is not an object of veneration within the walls of a General Hospital, but it is decidedly the fault of the nurses' teachers that a lack of veneration often becomes in practice an actual hostility.

Self-preservation is the first law of nature, and if the Practitioner considers that Registration of Nurses will tend to establish a dual control calculated to weaken his position, and therefore to endanger the safety of his patient, he will oppose it. If the Nursing Press is to be regarded as representing the views of its readers, in that Paper which contains something beyond clippings from other periodicals, and which, although I do not agree with many of the views held by its able Editress, is most brilliantly written, then I am forced to believe that nurses consider them-

selves as members of a Profession distinct and separate from that of medicine and surgery. I dissent from this view entirely. Nursing is a subordinate branch of medicine, and not a particularly highly specialised branch; in my opinion certainly not so developed nor so important as that of cooking.

Trained nursing I regard as the performance of certain domestic functions in such a manner as to be neither harmful to the Patient nor to the community, and it is in accordance with this view that I hope no attempt will be made to restrict the practice of nursing to those whom it is proposed to register; and again, I trust that the fatal mistake of admitting untrained persons simply because they are at present nursing, will not be committed. I would strongly advise that none should be admitted unless they have received the minimum of training.

Provided that nothing is done to imply that a person is registered, I presume that person will be free to practise the calling of nursing.

The same thing obtains in the Medical World, where anyone is allowed to physic and drench his fellow creatures, provided he does not hold himself out as legally qualified to do so.

The question of expense has also to be considered. It will be impossible to restrict the practice of nursing to those who are registered; otherwise those patients who are unable to pay a registered nurse's fees, which, I presume, would be about £2 2s. a week, would either have to dispense with any paid assistance or would be driven to take refuge in hospitals or infirmaries. I do not wish to appear as advocating the employment of untrained nurses, but it must be evident that, where the services of trained assistance cannot be procured, it would be a distinct hardship to prevent the employment of untrained help, and I would point out that, in the great majority of cases of illness, an intelligent woman with proper instructions and adequate supervision, can do a very great deal.

Personally, I am inclined to regard the possession of a qualification as somewhat of a nuisance. It reduces everyone to a level of deadly respectability and prevents those airy flights into the delightful realms of advertisement which offer such scope for the imagination and are at the same time so profitable. Imagine the installation of a Bio Photograph in front of your house representing Nurse Robinson de Smythe in the act of taking a temperature. Picture to yourself the look of calm superiority on the face of the nurse and the expression of beatific contentment on the part of the patient. Luxuries of this sort will be denied you, and, at the most, only a coloured lamp will be allowed,

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