

speaks, as it has pointed out, with an intimate knowledge of her subject, and her conclusions are supported by a large number of her colleagues who are in a position to judge. It is, however, with unfeigned pleasure that we observe the *Lancet* defines the position of the Matron of a Poor Law Infirmary on the same lines as we have always laid down, namely, as subordinate to the medical authorities as regards the medical treatment of the patients, but officially recognized as the officer responsible for the discipline and control of the nursing staff. This is as it should be, and if once this division of labour is understood, that is if the limits of authority both of medical men and of Superintendents of Nursing are defined and recognized, the nursing of the sick will attain to a higher plane than has yet been reached.

THE opinion which Dr. William J. Smyly, F.R.C.P., of Dublin, has formed of nurses, does not appear to be a high one. In a paper read before the British Medical Association, on the Maternal Mortality in Childbed, in which he discusses the *pros* and *cons* of prophylactic douching in maternity cases, he points out the absolute necessity for observing perfect asepsis. He then goes on to say, "When we remember, however, that this operation, if carried out two or three times every day, must necessarily be entrusted to a nurse, I have no hesitation in saying that the preservation of perfect asepsis or anything approaching it will be found in general practice to be absolutely impossible. Where are such nurses to be found? In these countries they are certainly rare."

TRAINED nurses, more especially those of the Adelaide Hospital, Dublin, to which Dr. Smyly is attached as a member of the visiting staff, will scarcely feel complimented at the estimation in which their profession is held by him. Their *amour propre* may, however, survive when they reflect how many eminent obstetricians realize to the full the value of the services which nurses render them in the conscientious, skilled, and constant care of their maternity cases, and who are not backward in expressing their indebtedness for such help.

VERY interesting is Dr. Smyly's account of the efforts of a pioneer of aseptic midwifery, Ignaz Philip Semmelweis, in 1846 an assistant to Professor Klein in the maternity department of the Vienna Hospital. He it was who discovered not only that putrefaction was a cause of puerperal fever, but also that the disease could be conveyed to the patient

by the fingers of her attendant, and directed that, before attending lying-in women, such attendants in the Vienna Hospital should always wash their hands in a solution of chloride of lime, when the mortality at once fell from 9.5 to 3.05 per cent.

"UNHAPPY he who is in advance of his century!" Having been defeated by the intrigues of his colleagues whose animosity he had aroused in his candidature for a professorship in Vienna, he went to Buda Pesth as senior physician to the Rochus Hospital, and during his term of office reduced the mortality to 0.85 per cent. The history of this man, we are told, "urging his great discovery upon those who received it with indifference, or hostility, and ridicule, even stopping the passers-by in the streets to impress on them the importance of life-saving truths which they would not receive—this forms a tragedy fit to make the angels weep. In these endeavours he fretted and fumed his life away, until at last reason departed and he was consigned to the lunatic asylum in Vienna, where four years later he died from septic poisoning, that very disease which he spent his life in combating.

At the last meeting of the Uckfield Board of Guardians the following communication was received from the male nurse:—"The Infirmary, July 30th, 1900. I beg herein to tender you my resignation, and to notify you that I shall leave your service on the 30th day of August next. The causes of my resigning are: (a) Indifferent rations and the manner in which they are served; (b) the indifferent and inefficient manner in which the night nurse performs her duties; (c) inadequate supply of clean linen, *e.g.*, I am forced to use a wet article over and over again, inasmuch as I have been prohibited to send same to the laundry until it is soiled; (d) in regard to my food, I have had different treatment from other officers, including those who obtain ration money. (Signed) E. Davies."

THE matter was referred to the House Committee to investigate and report upon that day, and they were of opinion that there was no ground for the charges which had been made and recommended that the resignation be accepted. It would be interesting to know if Mr. Davies adheres to his statements.

THE prize awarded at Dr. Steeven's Hospital, Dublin, as the result of the examination on Surgical Nursing, was presented to the successful candidate by Wm. T. Haughton, M.B., B.C.

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