

Fry's

300

Gold Medals, &c.

PURE
CONCENTRATED

Cocoa

"It deserves all the praise it has received from the Leaders
of the Profession.—*Medical Magazine.*"

THE
Nursing Record

EVERY SATURDAY
ONE PENNY.

AND

The Hospital World.

EDITED BY MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK.

"QUI NON
PROFICIT DEFICIT."

No. 694.

SATURDAY, JULY 20, 1901.

VOL. XXVII.

Editorial.

PROFESSIONAL SECRECY.

IT will be observed, from the letter of our Special Correspondent in Holland, which is published in another column, that the Dutch Association of Nurses has, at its recent annual meeting, determined to make important alterations, both in its rules and in its organisation. To the latter we will devote careful consideration in due course; and the former matter is one of which the importance, both to the nursing profession and to the public, can scarcely be exaggerated. It will be observed that, in the words of our correspondent, the Amsterdam section of the Dutch Association has introduced the following new regulation:

"That any nurse, to whom, after a well-passed examination, the certificate for sick nursing is granted, is bound to vow, before receiving her diploma, to keep as a sacred secret all things that will come as such to her knowledge in her professional life."

This is, as we have said, an entirely new departure in the nursing world. But it represents a curious reversion to ancient custom in the case of medical men. Two thousand

years ago, the Greek physicians were called upon to take a most solemn obligation, on being admitted to the medical profession, that they would in no way, and under no circumstances, reveal any matter which might come to their knowledge in their professional capacity. From that day to this, the tradition has been handed down, and most scrupulously observed by every medical man who respects his calling and himself. Of course, there are some who do not feel the restriction so deeply as others; but, taking the great body of the medical profession throughout the world, it may be said that their adhesion to the ancient vow of secrecy is absolute.

Indeed, in some countries, notably in France, special legislation protects the doctor and the priest from penalties to which they might be subject in consequence of their refusal to reveal professional secrets. So far has this idea been carried that in more than one country the doctor is actually prevented by law, under a heavy penalty, from infringing professional confidences. In this country, no such legislation has ever been attempted, but the public trust in a medical man's professional secrecy is well merited and universal; and in our Courts of law it has been found necessary on several

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)