

occasions for the judge to warn a medical witness that his oath to tell "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth" makes it compulsory upon him to give any information he possesses, however confidential it might be from a professional point of view, which the administration of justice may require from him.

With regard to nurses, it must be remembered that nursing is to all intents and purposes an entirely new profession; a fact with which we always console ourselves when we find that nurses exhibit so little *esprit de corps*, and so small an amount of professional feeling. But it will come as a useful reminder to nurses that the professional position which has now been accorded to their calling entails upon them corresponding responsibilities. We have frequently advocated in these columns the publication of a series of ethical rules for their guidance and direction; and foremost amongst such would undoubtedly be placed some such injunction as that involved in the ancient Oath of Hippocrates, to which we have referred. It cannot be denied that nurses, as a class, have not yet risen to the complete understanding of their duties in this respect. It has become almost proverbial that two nurses cannot meet together, even on the top of an omnibus, without beginning to discuss details relating to their respective patients; and it is to be feared that the habit of gossiping over even the private affairs of their patients is not unknown amongst the semi-trained nurses of the present day. The rules of the leading nursing Co-operations prominently state that "the nurses are enjoined to hold sacred the knowledge they obtain of the private affairs of the family in which they are engaged;" and that such a regulation has been considered necessary is sufficient evidence of the opinion held upon the matter by those who are best acquainted with nurses. The nursing profession will only obtain the complete confidence of the public, as the medical profession has always done, by every individual nurse proving herself worthy of that trust, by personal conduct as well as by professional trustworthiness. And it would, in our opinion, conduce towards that public confidence if it were known that every trained nurse was bound to conform to the strictest ethical rules—regulating her conduct towards her fellow-workers, towards the medical profession, and towards the public.

Annotations.

INFECTION BY REFRESHMENTS.

Now that the summer season is commencing, there will be the usual invasion of the streets by vendors of ices and cooling drinks, and at the seaside will be found barrows where periwinkles, shrimps, and other cheap foods are sold. The danger of infection is well known. Specific diseases, enteric and other fevers, have been directly traced to the use of glasses, cups, and spoons, containing the germs. Yet one can see daily the same fork or glass used over and over again without having been disinfected. Usually a hurried dip into warm water, and a rub with a greasy towel is deemed sufficient at the best restaurants. One shudders to think of the possibilities!

It should be a *sine qua non* at all refreshment bars and other places where food and drink are sold, that a constant supply of water at boiling point must be at hand. In it all spoons or forks must be dropped before they are used again, and in drying them a clean towel must be applied. In large restaurants and tea-rooms, there can be no difficulty, as they always have a supply of boiling water ready. Unfortunately it is used, as a rule, for preparing a decoction of tea or coffee, with which the traveller by rail or the excursionist in a hurry may risk scalding his mouth, although he may escape imbibing living microbes. By a similar apparatus boiling water for sterilizing spoons, etc., can be obtained.

The refreshment barrow in the street can be fitted with a petroleum burner, over which to boil water. If this be insisted on means will readily be found to carry out the regulations. The public health demands it.

A HOTEL-SANATORIUM

It is some years since we submitted a scheme to a director of one of our great hotel companies for the organization of a private hotel hospital for paying patients. He had not the pluck to initiate this novel experiment, and it is interesting to note that it is about to be started by a few Chicago physicians. Five of the foremost practitioners of that city are prepared to build a large private hotel and sanatorium at a cost of \$400,000. The plan proposed is on an entirely different principle to the English Nursing Homes, to which certain American medical journals have erroneously

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)