

"To have a body rich in health,
Is to possess the greatest wealth."



"The richest in flesh-forming and energy-producing constituents.
There is No Better Food."

Dr. ANDREW WILSON, F.R.S.E., &c.

THE
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ONE PENNY.

AND

The Hospital World.

"QUI NON
PROFICIT DEFICIT."

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Editorial.

THE RELATIVE VALUE OF THEORY AND PRACTICE.

An important point is raised by the report recently presented by Dr. J. H. Bryant, assistant-physician at Guy's Hospital, to the Portsmouth Guardians, on the result of the examination which he conducted into the knowledge of thirty nurses training at their Infirmary. Dr. Bryant wrote that of the six third-year nurses who presented themselves five qualified, and he recommended them for certificates. The part that medical men take in the education of nurses is a very valuable one. They are able to impart instruction in anatomy, physiology, hygiene, and in the theory of medicine and surgery, so far as it concerns nurses, which could not be given as efficiently by any nurse, for nurses do not receive the scientific training, or possess the accurate knowledge qualifying them to be the best instructors in these subjects. But though theoretical knowledge is an important and necessary basis of nursing education if the best results are to be attained, the essential part of a nurse's training is, after all, her education in practical work. And, therefore, a standard of certifi-

cation which is based solely upon a medical examination into theoretical knowledge must be considered inadequate, and a reversion to the time when nursing was an unscientific and domestic vocation, and the paramount necessity for skilled instruction in practical nursing work was still unrecognised. But we now appreciate the great demands made upon the nursing profession by the associated profession of medicine; we know also that only those who are themselves skilful nurses can teach others to perform practical nursing duties. It follows that an experienced nurse is the only person competent to conduct the practical examination of probationers and to test their knowledge in this respect. Therefore, no certificates should be awarded to nurses solely on a medical examination into their theoretical knowledge; but a place, and a very important place, should be given in awarding certificates to the marks gained in an examination conducted by an experienced nurse or matron. Only so can a just proportion between theory and practice be maintained, and, however brilliant a nurse may be on paper, her knowledge is useless for the welfare of the sick if she is not practically skilful.

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