

Annotation.

NURSES' HUMBUG.

A writer in the *Pharmaceutical Journal* complains bitterly of the way in which nurses are becoming "universal providers." He asserts "with the long veil attached to the back of the bonnet (which some of them seem to consider a diploma), they give advice (against the doctor's interests), show the patient what they can save by (the nurse) obtaining from certain wholesale houses, but the saving (or a portion of it) often goes into the nurse's pocket. Doctor must be doctor, chemist chemist, and nurse treated by one and all as such, kept in her place by wholesale, retail, and at the Chemists' Exhibition, a place from which she should be excluded, but where she is made too much of by wholesale and retail."

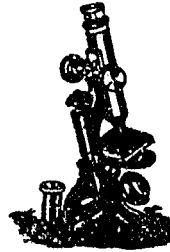
If there is any truth in the assertion that nurses obtain drugs and nursing requisites at lower prices than those at which they are supplied to the public in order to pocket the difference, or part of it, between the wholesale and the retail price, the custom is certainly one which is to be condemned, and is unworthy of the members of an honourable calling. We cannot believe that well-trained nurses—those, indeed, who would be entitled to this name were a standard of nursing education once defined—condescend to add a few shillings to their annual income by acting as purveyors of the goods needed by their patients, though amongst the variety of persons who assume the name it is not improbable that many see no reason why they should not add to their earnings by pushing retail goods.

We see no reason, if patients are using such articles as absorbent wool in large quantities, against a nurse advising their purchase from a wholesale establishment.

Why should either wholesale or retail, who desire to keep nurses in their place, lessen their legitimate profits by supplying either to medical practitioners, or to nurses, goods at a lower rate than that charged to the general public? Surely the matter is in their own hands in this respect. May not the custom have arisen in the past in the hope that doctor and nurse, who so constantly come into contact with the sick public, will indirectly, if not actually, act as agents for the chemists? Otherwise why the solicitation of their patronage at exhibitions? Neither doctors nor nurses require an extra supply of drugs or nursing requisites for their own use.

Medical Matters.

INSECTS AND THE TRANSMISSION OF DISEASE.



A wide world of speculation has been opened, since the part played by mosquitoes in transmitting malaria; by the tsetse fly in transmitting nagana fever; and (probably) by another fly in transmitting sleeping sickness, has been established, as to the agency of insects in the transmission of disease when the method of transmission is otherwise unknown. Thus, a contemporary points out, the flea has been credited with the transmission of the plague bacillus, and it has been suggested that the coincidence of plague in rats and among human beings is caused by the fact that fleas on plague-infected rats acquire the bacillus and then inoculate man with it. Within the last few months it has been suggested that the spread of leprosy in the United States is due to the same agency, and it is proposed to establish an inquiry there to discover what part, if any, the flea plays in the dissemination both of plague and leprosy. No examination of the conditions of plague-infected areas, however, has ever convicted the flea of the crime with which it is charged. It is stated that the Indian Plague Commission could come to no conclusion either one way or the other. Dr. Herzog, of Manila, acquits the flea. Dr. Klein, in a review of Dr. W. J. Simpson's recent treatise on plague, states: "In support of the theory—that fleas, &c., convey the plague from rat to man—no valid experimental evidence is brought forward. All the direct evidence at present available is of a negative character. The numerous modes of conveyance of plague from man to man, from rat to rat, or from rat to man and *vice versa* which have actually been observed under natural as also under laboratory conditions are quite sufficient to account for all the facts without ascribing to the flea any other than a very restricted and accidental rôle, if any."

At any rate, whether the flea is capable of all the offences which have been imputed to it or not, it is certain that where cleanliness reigns the flea disappears, and we come back once more to the fundamental truth that the greatest preventive of disease is scrupulous cleanliness.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)