

affecting their certificate most are those given for teaching. For this, lessons are taught to a class of children before a critical audience by the aspiring teacher. This test may not be practicable for nurses, but it brings home the important fact—viz., that not only must a teacher know her subject, but also be able to impart knowledge.

For the probationer, who is well educated and cultured, it is trying to have to work under one whose grammatical errors in ordinary conversation are not only legion, but who is unable to give efficient instruction.

Drastic treatment for the existing evil is impossible, for there are many who, however incapable as teachers, and lacking in culture, have done yeoman service in hospital wards, and after giving the best years of their lives cannot be turned out in middle age. But it is with the Sister of to-day we have to do as on her training depends the efficiency of the nurse of to-morrow. The responsibility of her position will be felt when she reflects that, as year by year, their term of probation having expired, the probationers go out in the nursing world to do either good, bad, or indifferent work, and by that work the training school will be judged, and, alas! very often misjudged; for as there are two types of Sister, so also are there two types of probationer, and the best teaching available will be thrown away on the probationer whose sole aim is to get through her training with the least possible exertion.

A Matron appointing a probationer, on the completion of her training, to the post of Sister, pays the latter a high compliment, but to choose all her Sisters so will be detrimental to the teaching. If she has a nurse she would particularly like to keep as Sister, let her go away for further training and experience. This will broaden her views.

There are splendid Sisters who have never been out of their training school, but these are women of exceptional merit who, realising the rapid strides always being made in surgery and medicine, keep themselves up to the mark by hard reading, and embrace every opportunity of seeing new treatment.

Let all Matrons who have the privilege of choice have the moral courage to sacrifice self interest, however temptingly convenient it may be to appoint one, whose highest commendations are that she knows the ways of the place, and is not possessed of sufficient brilliance to eclipse her Matron; and thus raise the tone of the training school, so that never on its Sisters can the slur be cast, "*ici ce ne sont pas des dames*"!

ISABEL H. PENNIE.

## Interview with the Hon. Secretary of the Royal Victorian Trained Nurses' Association.

A common profession, and common interests in regard to that profession form a strong bond of union between those who have never met before. More especially is this the case with nurses who with the freemasonry of their craft seem to have no need for the preliminaries in forming a new acquaintance under ordinary circumstances, but to plunge right to the heart of things forthwith.

So it happened that on meeting Miss Helena Brayshay, the Hon. Secretary of the Royal Victorian Trained Nurses' Association, who is now on a visit to this country, one lost no time in formalities, but over the friendly cup of tea—beloved of nurses throughout the world—one found oneself talking at once of vital things.

Miss Brayshay's present visit is her first to this country, for she was born in Australia, and has never before been to Europe. She thus regards herself as an Australian native, but not entirely an Australian, to be this one must not only be born in Australia, but of Australian born parents, and her parents were English.

Miss Brayshay was trained at the Children's Hospital, Melbourne, a hospital containing over 100 beds, and was afterwards appointed Sister-in-Charge of its Convalescent Home. She was then on the Staff of a Private Hospital for four years, and subsequently did private nursing for another three. For the last six years she has acted as Surgical Sister to Dr. Rothwell Adams, who is Lecturer in Obstetrics and Gynecology in the University of Melbourne. As he is at present in Europe she has taken the opportunity of getting away for a time.

Miss Brayshay is, as is natural, keenly interested in the question of nursing organisation, in connection with which the society of which she is Honorary Secretary has done such good work. It is, of course, she says, a simpler matter in a colony of the size of Victoria than in a country like this. The nurses there number perhaps 1,000 all told, and vested interests were comparatively few.

The Association has, therefore, been able to establish a minimum standard of general education for probationers, and to secure the co-operation of the training schools, so that all the pupils of these schools throughout the Colony now enter for the central examination instituted by the Association, and there is now only one hospital in the Colony which gives its own certificate, the certificate of the Association taking precedence of all others.

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