

knowing his *protégée's* ignorance, exercises a watchful supervision over details, and her own practical—because personal—experiences enable her, with the smattering of technical training she has received, to discharge her duties in the majority of cases passably well. One great objection to the system, however, is that in the event of any danger or difficulty arising the attendant is helpless, and if the Doctor's aid cannot be immediately obtained, irreparable harm may ensue to the patient. And another equally valid objection is that many who have thus commenced with Monthly work, come shortly to believe themselves capable of nursing everything, and attempt to do so, sooner or later with disastrous results. In fact, one of the most startling facts in connection with the helplessness of the public to protect itself against ignorant Nurses is that hundreds of women now call themselves, and are accepted as, certificated Nurses, because they hold a parchment testimonial, granted after six weeks' service in a Lying-in Hospital.

On the other hand, it is equally incorrect to assert that a general training is all that is requisite to make a good Monthly Nurse. We would go further even, and argue that even an excellent special training superadded to a complete general nursing education will not alone suffice. We have heard of women who as Medical and Surgical Nurses could not be surpassed, and yet who have been utterly routed and defeated by an infant two or three days old. This is a mystery we do not presume to understand, but which is apparently explicable only upon the supposition that some tactile aptitude must be absent in such cases. But this is only, after all, one more reason for the adoption of this branch of work by those thus specially qualified to undertake it. There are other and more weighty arguments still, which may be adduced in favour of this being made a very distinct specialty in nursing. More than in any other department it is necessary that the patient should feel confidence in her attendant. Consequently it is more common for the Nurse to be chosen by the mother, because she has previously been with some friend or relation, than, as in ordinary cases of illness, for her to be recommended by the Doctor, or by some Nursing Institution. And of course both for Nurses and patients this has many advantages. We know of a Nurse who for several years past has been almost continuously engaged in nursing one member after another of a large family, to her considerable pecuniary gain, and to their great comfort and satisfaction, as she is now almost as much of a friend and confidant to all of them as is the family Doctor. We are led to

believe that this system is slowly spreading, and we imagine that, as more fully trained gentlewomen adopt the specialty, it will become more and more universally the custom. Then a very strong argument in favour of specialism in this matter is the immense importance of the Monthly Nurse being free from any possibility of conveying infection. If she be engaged in all kinds of Nursing, the danger to her most susceptible patient may be very real. No Doctor would dream of going himself from a fever case or one of blood-poisoning to visit a woman in, or shortly after, her confinement. And yet a Nurse who is engaged in general work might be required direct from such a case to undertake the close care of such a patient. This, be it remembered, is not a question of probabilities. Unhappily, instances are neither few nor far between where the deaths of lying-in women have been proved to be due to poisonous infection.

Other reasons might easily be advanced in support of our contention that Monthly Nursing should be a specialty entire and distinct from other branches of the calling. But unless we are mistaken, events are even now rapidly tending in this direction. It is, perhaps, not generally known that the number of Nurses who go through a special course at an Obstetric Hospital, after they have gone through the full curriculum of training at a general Hospital, is very large and steadily increasing. More and more of them also are every year going one step further, and studying practical Midwifery also. *Apropos* of this fact, we may say that it has afforded us no small amusement to notice the struggle made by unprofessional people to prove that Midwives are somehow *very* superior to Nurses. If these persons ever discover the truth, they will be astounded to find how many of the women who are successful in gaining the diploma of the Obstetrical Society of London are fully-trained Hospital Nurses.

In short, the logic of accomplished facts will probably at no distant time prove practically what we now only advance theoretically: that it is for the benefit of Nurses, for the advancement of Nursing, and, above all, for the welfare of both mother and child, that the Monthly Nurse should be a woman who has been thoroughly trained in a general Hospital; who has had practical experience in addition in a Lying-in Hospital; who is known to, and trusted by, the patient and her family on account of similar services faithfully and efficiently rendered to friends and relations; who is more useful to the Doctor, and more helpful to her charges, because she has constant practice in such special cases—because, in short, she has adopted this branch of work as a distinct and very profitable specialty.

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