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"QUI NON PROFICIT, DEFICIT."

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## EDITORIAL.

### SPECIALISM IN NURSING.—V.

IS it desirable that some Nurses should devote themselves solely to the care of adults, and others entirely restrict their attention to children? This, perhaps, is the most difficult of all the questions which we have been considering in relation to this subject of specialism in Nursing, and upon it we imagine there will be much variety of opinion amongst our readers. There will be differences even on the matter of the training. These columns contained just eighteen months ago a paper—then recently read before the British Nurses' Association—by Miss Catherine Wood, in which, as the outcome of her unrivalled experience of the Nursing of sick children, the authoress urged that it was a branch totally distinct from that of adult Nursing, and needed a special education for its efficient performance. And the arguments which she adduced would certainly convince most unprejudiced minds that her proposition is quite irrefutable. Those who desire to peruse them will find the paper in question on pages 79 to 87 of the "First Annual Report of the Association." But there will be, doubtless, many who will entirely traverse Miss

Wood's conclusions, and will point out for example that children are nursed in general Hospitals by Nurses who work for a longer or shorter time in the children's Wards as part of the usual curriculum of their training.

In the articles which we have hitherto devoted to this subject of specialism we have insisted, in each and every case, that the general training must precede the special, just as the simple must always be studied before the complex can be rightly understood. Is this Nursing of children then an exception, or does it conform to the general rule? The logical conclusions of Miss Wood's argument would be that the special was all-important, and of the other debaters' contention that the special might be valuable, but only as founded upon a general knowledge of the art. From the former it would follow that there should be a distinct class, not only of learners, but of workers in children's cases; from the latter, that specialism in this branch is unnecessary, just as adults are but children of a larger growth.

It will be observed that we are expanding, not quoting, both propositions, and it may be inquired what practical object can be gained by an academic discussion. We have more than once been asked why we have devoted so much space during the last two years in this column to questions of Nursing education and Nursing work, which are apparently hardly yet within the region of practical politics. The present subject furnishes an apt opportunity for an explanation. The keynote of this Journal from its first issue has been struck by its motto—we aim at Progress. We do not expect as readers women who are as destitute of *esprit de corps* as of education, who expect a professional paper to be an *olla podrida* of a dozen "ologies," who so long as they can purchase a cheap periodical with a little bit of a love story, and a page of riddles, a smattering of

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