

some few get a better chance in cottage homes; but many, very many, are done to death in different ways, often by the distracted mother, who, dishonoured and disgraced, finds the dark future with her child depending on her too terrible to contemplate, and in desperation wipes out the unwanted little life that means so great a burden; so innocent lives are lost, poor girls are branded as murderers, and from time to time forfeit their lives too, and vice is still rampant.

Would it not be better to have some such State institution where at least the lives of these unwanted ones could be saved, and the mothers kept from crime, and where legitimate children could be sent in times of home stress?

Of course this could only be a palliation of a serious evil, for, so long as the law allows the fathers of these 40,000 illegitimates to go almost scot free so long will these evils exist; but when the man is made to take his stand by the side of the girl he seduces then will there be a diminution of illegitimacy, and to a certain extent infant mortality. This will only be when women are permitted to take their rightful place at the ballot by the side of men. May God send that day soon for the better protection of our women and children.

MARY BURR.

A Game of Make-believe.

Medical opinion at the present day is not entirely unanimous as to how much nurses are supposed to know. There are medical men like Dr. Edward Harrison, of Hull, the author of the best book on nursing which has been published for some time, progressive and liberal minded, who know that a nurse who does not understand the principles upon which the up-to-date surgeon is working is an unsafe assistant for him. There are others who seem to think that if a nurse shows intelligence and keenness about her work it is because she desires to encroach on the province of the doctor. To attend lectures given to nurses by men of this school of thought is to learn the low estimate placed by them on the intelligence of women, the lectures being more suited to children of tender years than to women undertaking the responsible duties of a nurse.

A Matron recently told us that attending such a lecture she felt impelled to rise and protest, and had continually to feel her cap strings and remind herself that she was a nurse, and an official of the hospital, in order to prevent herself from doing so.

The following instance, given by the *Dietetic and Hygienic Gazette*, is typical of the type of mind to which we refer:

A physician called at one of our biggest hospitals to see a ward patient whom he had sent there a few days before for operative care. He found his patient in charge of her nurse, who had just finished douching her. The neatly written record sheet bore an entry to the effect that the patient had come from the operating room, "in good condition," on the previous morning. After inspecting this record the doctor asked the nurse:

"What sort of an operation did the patient have?"

"I'm not quite sure," said she, "but I think it was a curettement."

"What did they remove with the curette?"

"I think it was nothing but a bit of placenta," said the nurse with a desperate glance at her questioner, "but, really, doctor, I'm not quite sure. You know we nurses are not supposed to know what is done to our patients in the operating room."

"But you *do* know, don't you," pursued the doctor, mercilessly.

"Why, yes," said the nurse with a significant glance, "we have to know in order to do our work properly. And what we can't find out, we often take for granted. But we are not supposed to know. We are just supposed to nurse our patients, and not to ask for information that is not given us."

Here is one more instance, thought the doctor, where the pupil has more wisdom than her instructors.

In how many hospitals does this admirable system of discipline prevail!

The pupil nurse is bound to know all that she can find out about her case. It is her main business. But she is not *supposed* to know!

And the doctors, and the head nurses, and the kind instructors in her training school, are not supposed to know that she knows anything that they are not supposed to tell her!

Isn't it a pretty little game of make-believe for intelligent grown-ups to be playing—in school?

Our Collaborators.

We wish to tender our sincere thanks to our collaborators for their assistance during the past year. Never has the Journal had so prosperous a time, and we feel sure much of its success is due to their help. Articles on practical nursing, and foreign letters, are very popular.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)