

the only teaching the probationers get (the staffs get none) is a short course of lectures on anatomy and physiology, which do not include one word on hygiene or bacteriology. How is it possible unless basic laws of good nursing are taught that pupils can benefit by practical training. The probationers are taught and learn like parrots. Here is an example: A probationer is cleansing her hands for theatre work.

*Matron*: Why are you cleansing your hands?

*Pro*: To make them surgically clean.

*Matron*: What is surgically clean?

*Pro*: I don't know.

*Matron*: What are you using?

*Pro*: Hot water and soap, carbolic lotion, alcohol.

*Matron*: What soap?

*Pro*: I don't know.

*Matron*: What is carbolic?

*Pro*: I don't know.

*Matron*: What is alcohol?

*Pro*: I don't know.

*Matron*: Why must your hands be surgically clean?

*Pro*: Because if the wound becomes infected Sister says she will get the blame.

*Matron* (smiling): Infected with what?

*Pro*: Oh! the surgeon's beard, or the house-surgeon's moustache, or the dresser's blackened boots, and all their woollen trousers (one sees all these things in the theatre here).

*Matron*: Anything else?

*Pro*: Why, of course, bacteria.

*Matron*: What are bacteria?

*Pro* (on safe ground): The word bacteria is derived from a Greek word meaning a rod, or *Schizomycetes*. The general term for a large number of microscopic unicellular organisms devoid of chlorophyll, and consisting of an albuminoid body called—

*Matron*: Nurse, you are drying your hands on a dirty towel; some day we must again discuss surgical cleanliness.

And so on *ad infinitum*.

Let us hope that the very first thing the Central Nursing Council will do—when it exists—will be to lay down some basic laws of good nursing. At present the lack of them is very unjust to pupils and patients.

Yours truly,

A COUNTRY MATRON.

#### PRACTICAL POINTS.

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."

DEAR MADAM,—As you are publishing some interesting articles on sour milk, perhaps you would kindly procure for me an answer to a question I have often asked, but never had a satisfactory reply to. (1) Why is sour milk in, say a baby's bottle, unwholesome, and so beneficial when eaten with a, say, spoon? I mean at what stage does it become wholesome, and why? (2) If you found a person senseless, and could obtain no history of the case, and no clue,

how would you distinguish syncope from heart failure from concussion of the brain?

Yours faithfully,

E. L. C. EDEN.

Merchligen, Rubigen, Berne.

[In reply to your question:

(1) A baby's powers of digestion, and a baby's stomach and intestines, are very different from those of an adult, and consequently vomiting, diarrhoea, and rapid exhaustion are caused in a baby by articles of food which would be nutritious to a grown-up person.

(2) A nurse would scarcely be called upon to diagnose such a case, and would be very foolish to attempt to do so. But "syncope from heart failure" generally means death, and "concussion of the brain" generally ends in recovery.

If the case were simple syncope, however, the pupils would probably be dilated, and in simple concussion they would probably be contracted. In the former case there would be no evidence of injury, in the latter there would be bruising of the head, and perhaps bleeding from a lacerated wound on the scalp.—Ed.]

## Comments and Replies.

*An Indignant Irish Nurse*.—Your letter will appear next week.

*Mac, Dublin*.—You might enquire of the Atlantic Transport Line, 38, Leadenhall Street, E.C., the Cunard Steamship Co., 30, Cockspur Street, S.W., and the Hamburg-American Line, 16, Cockspur Street, S.W.

### NOTICE.

An application form for those who wish to become members of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses will be found on page iii. of cover. It will soon be too late to help on the important work of this Society. No habitual reader of this journal can, we feel sure, be content to stand aside and let others found the great Profession of Nursing. Now is the time to help.

## Notices.

### CONTRIBUTIONS.

The Editor will at all times be pleased to consider articles of a suitable nature for insertion in this Journal—those on practical nursing are specially invited. The Editor will be pleased to receive paragraphs, such as items of nursing news, results of nurses' examinations, new appointments, reports of hospital functions, also letters on questions of interest to nurses, and newspapers marked with reports of matters of professional interest.

Such communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not necessarily for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, London, W.

### OUR PUZZLE COMPETITION.

Rules for competing for the Pictorial Puzzle-Prize will be found on Advertisement page xii.

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