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## Editorial.

### NURSES AS TEACHERS.

Nursing Education is still in the crucible, but, as a profession, we are learning that many things are legitimately required of us which did not enter into our calculations when we began our training. For instance, to most nurses in training the idea of public speaking is abhorrent; they have "never done such a thing in their lives," and yet—whether it is the ward sister who gives "grinds" to the probationers, the Matron who lectures to them, the midwife approved by the Central Midwives Board "for the purposes of signing Forms III. and IV."—to the plain person a clumsy way of saying that she is a teacher of practical midwifery—or the district nurse who gives cottage lectures, most nurses who attain to positions of any responsibility in their profession have from time to time to act as teachers, and it is only one step further to explain the needs of a nursing association, or of the profession at large, to a meeting composed of members of the general public. Nurses, in short, as a trusted and responsible body of workers, have to respond to the new calls made upon them in the evolution of their profession.

In her latest book, "The Common Growth," Miss M. Loane has many wise things to say on the subject of cottage lectures. Thus she writes: "Just so long as hygiene and sick nursing are neglected, or studied in separate compartments, just so long health will languish and sickness abound. . . . If we could only attempt to teach either nursing or hygiene, either cure or prevention, it would be a bitter choice, and we shall never derive full benefit from either until they are studied simultaneously."

In connection with the objection, "Can't

you teach people to empty the dustpan on the fire when they have swept a room without calling it a hygienic precaution?" Miss Loane reminds us that, in spite of the old proverb, fine words *do* butter parsnips, "Offer to teach decent working women how to keep their houses clean, and very justly they will be much offended. Offer to explain the laws of hygiene, and you may be able to point out some branches of cleanliness which they have most excusably overlooked."

After all, is it not inevitable that, as nurses we should have to assume the role of teachers, and as we are busy people that we should become lecturers, and economise our time by teaching a number of people together instead of singly? We are (or should be) possessed of very definite practical knowledge, knowledge for lack of which the people perish. Take, for instance, the slaughter of the innocents in a hot summer by reason of the unsuitable milk administered to them; the infection of healthy persons by the tubercle bacillus, because the means to destroy it are not known, and therefore not taken. Shall we, who know, let deaths and infection occur because public speaking is no part of our duty, and we cannot undertake it? We are pledged to save life, to prevent disease, and we fail in our duty if we neglect any means whereby we can do so.

In regard to lectures to working-class mothers, who so suited to give them sympathetically and simply as nurses who know their needs and their limitations, and who should long to share knowledge which will make lives easier and homes happier. For that is the essence of teaching—at the bottom the teaching and the missionary spirit are the same, the desire to share our own good things with those who have them not.

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