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## EDITORIAL.

### THE TRAINING OF COLOURED NURSES.

The proposal in South Africa to establish an Order of Nurses in connection with the King Edward Memorial, to include native nurses, has raised the inevitable question of black and white.

At a recent meeting of the Board of the Kimberley Hospital, the Mayor of Beaconsfield asked why they in the Kimberley Hospital subjected their nurses to the danger and humiliation of nursing natives in the manner they did. They had in the country the "black peril," and while he was not in favour of introducing lynch law, yet he felt it a duty incumbent upon all to protect womanhood. The ignorant native interpreted the Christian ministrations of the nurses to be a sign of familiarity, and they lost the respect they otherwise had. The Mayor of Kimberley, on the other hand, said that he had not heard that the present arrangements had any effect on any of the nurses. They had received the greatest respect from the native patients they had nursed.

Several questions arise out of this discussion—

1. The wisdom or otherwise of the nursing of coloured patients by white women.
2. The training of native nurses.
3. The provision of an adequate supply of skilled nurses for the country.

In connection with the suggested danger of the nursing of coloured patients, it would be interesting to know if any case can be quoted in which the apprehended danger has arisen. The duty of the trained nurse is plain, to make no distinction of colour, creed, caste, or sex, but to put her services

freely at the disposal of all who need them, and the woman who cannot at the same time command the respect of her patients, had better turn her attention to some other calling. The woman with the true nursing spirit is colour blind, the particular pigment under her patient's skin concerns her not at all, she sees only the sick person needing her care. The management of patients of all kinds and conditions is, further, part of a nurse's training, and the one who can manage a large ward of male patients in a hospital or infirmary for the reception of white men will show the same resourcefulness in the native ward of an African hospital.

In regard to the training of natives (men and women) as nurses, the question immediately arises: Given the education, and the aptitude which must be demonstrated by all applicants for posts as probationers, what right have we to withhold from native races the instruction in the best methods of nursing their sick to which they are entitled? As regards aptitude this is possessed in a very marked degree by many Africans, for instance, we are assured by a member of the staff of this journal that were it not for the excellent nursing of an African night nurse it is highly probable that she would at this moment be filling a grave under African palm trees. As to the provision of an adequate supply of nurses for native patients in the South African Commonwealth, it is certain that this can only be effected by the employment of members of their own race. The question at issue is, are those who undertake this work to render unskilled service to the sick because their skilled sisters refuse to train them? If the question is left to the nursing profession to solve we have no doubt what the answer will be.

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