

fatally. I put the matter at once before the Hon. Surgeon of my district to take his instructions as to how long a time should elapse before Nurse L. could take up her new duties. "A month from now," was the reply; and in a little over that period Nurse came for her instruction. Imagine the mischief that might have occurred to our patient had this precaution not been taken. It may be urged for all-round Nursing that it is a better basis to go upon than no Nursing knowledge at all, which is perfectly true; but it appears to me that we require so little Medical and so little Surgical Nursing, using the terms in their widest sense, that all we do require of either could be taught in, and form a part of the curriculum of, our Lying-in Hospitals, in addition to the special instruction required. The Registration Board of our Association has, I believe, under its consideration a programme of practical Obstetric Nursing, which will doubtless prove a useful guide for women engaged in that department of Nursing work.

Before concluding my paper, I will briefly touch upon those points that mark out Obstetric Nursing as quite distinct from all other. Firstly, parturition itself involving duties special to labour. Now if all labours were the same, the duties might be regarded as routine, and one would be as good as a hundred; but all those acquainted with practical Midwifery know that such is not the case; the gravest complications may at any time arise, requiring special and higher qualifications in a Nurse. Now, how is a Nurse to acquire a knowledge of these possible troubles without experience, which in Nursing spells time; and of what value is a Nurse who does not know them? Secondly, the post-partum condition of the uterus, the key-note to all childbed Nursing, is not always the same, and a Nurse must be able to recognise these varying conditions in order to know, and note and report them intelligently to the accoucheur; from a want of this power of observation valuable information may be withheld from him. Obstetric binding is a special duty and requires practice to do it effectively, and all women are not the same. Lactation is a speciality of childbed Nursing, and the duties required in it are of the utmost importance, both to avert possible troubles, or to deal with them; as with labour, so with lactation, the conditions are not always the same, therefore the duties are *not* routine. Lastly, but by no means least in importance, comes the care and treatment of the newly-born, a point of duty that demands more thought, more patience, more tenderness than any other part of Obstetric Nursing. How many infantile lives are lost, and how much misery inflicted upon infants, by a careless or ignorant Nurse?

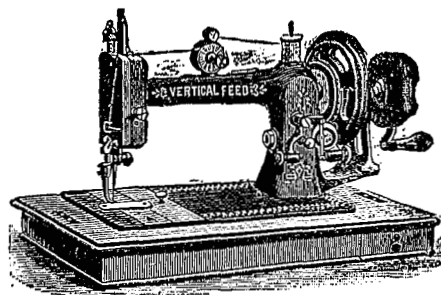
The conditions of early infantile life are *not* always identical; how then can the duties required in them be routine? Again, to an Obstetric Nurse a little elementary and practical knowledge of Midwifery is essential in enabling her to deal with simple but sudden emergencies, which greatly adds to her value as an Obstetric Nurse, and are of no use at all to any other Nursing.

Again, I ask how is a woman to acquire all these special qualifications without experience, and how is that knowledge to be acquired except by women who devote their whole time to Midwifery Nursing? Can it be done by a process of grafting as it were upon a common Nursing stock? These are some of the considerations that induce me to advise that women who take up Midwifery Nursing should keep to it. There is no portion of Nursing work so little routine as ours, demanding more fertility of resource, more calm self-reliance, more thorough acquaintance with detail; and one and all of these qualities are the outcome of knowledge, tried in the furnace of practical experience, which *time* alone can give.

No easy chair adviser addresses you now, but one who has devoted many years of earnest thought and patient toil to our portion of Nursing work; and it is with the view of strengthening the hands and encouraging the efforts of my young sister workers in their new career that I urge them to raise and dignify their work by good and laudable service, to devote themselves to it. It is worthy of your best powers; it brings out some of the highest qualities in a Nurse; it develops some of the best and tenderest attributes of womanhood; it has, in fact, more human nature in it than any other Nursing work.

### SPECIAL PRIZE COMPETITION.

WE have much pleasure in announcing that we are enabled to offer a Special Prize—viz., a Sewing Machine, as per illustration, which is furnished with a handsome walnut cover, of the value of FIVE GUINEAS, to the com-



petitor who makes and sends in the neatest and most effective NURSE'S CAP. *Rules.*—The cap, which should be accompanied with the full name and address of the competitor and a statement of the exact cost of the materials used in the making of it, with the coupon cut out of our

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)