

by unqualified men and women whose training is less complete and whose ideals are less desirable. It may be considered by some that the individual acting as an anaesthetist should be merely an adjunct to the operator, but since the latter has quite enough to worry him if he gives his undivided attention to the operation, his supervision of the anaesthesia is only perfunctory and so useless as a safeguard against mischance. Those who know anything about modern anaesthesia recognise that the mere handicraft aspect of the subject is the least important. To be an anaesthetist one must be a physiologist, a physician, and a surgeon, since the physiological knowledge compels familiarity with the action and interaction of the agents employed; the possession of a physician's acumen enables the anaesthetist to gauge the condition and resistive power of the patient towards the anaesthetics employed, while only surgical experience can enable the anaesthetist to know the requirements of the operator, the necessities of the operation, and to really assist, qua anaesthesia, the surgeon's manipulative skill. Can any training short of the full medical curriculum really give an honest basis to the person who sets forth to learn how to anaesthetise?

It is futile to suggest that because some nurses and V.A.D.s have proved themselves clever as handicraft anaesthetists, while many medical men have revealed inefficiency in this department of practice, that therefore the former class should be entrusted with the care of patients who have to face the risks of anaesthesia. No medical man without training is a satisfactory or safe anaesthetist. Theoretically every medically registered person is competent to perform any major operation, give any anaesthetic, or undertake an iridectomy. However, comparatively few can do any of these things properly. Indeed, some bone-setters are better at the manipulative work than many surgeons, but they lack the foundation of training in pathology necessary for the superstructure of the application of knowledge to practice. This is equally true as regards anaesthetics and their uses.

We agree entirely with this expert expression of opinion, based on scientific accuracy. No doubt certain V.A.D.s consider themselves as capable of performing the duties of the medical practitioner as they do those of the trained nurse and matron! Do not let us follow in their footsteps, but rather remain on the side of the angels!

#### IN MEMORY OF TWO HEROINES.

The Brussels Court of Justice has decided to convert the cells of the St. Gilles prison occupied by Miss Cavell and Mlle. Petit, both of whom were shot by the Germans, into a museum.

The clothes, books, and a few other possessions of these two brave women have been collected and taken there. Tablets draped in flags commemorating their heroic deaths have been placed on the doors of both cells, while inside the cells are portraits of the heroines wreathed in flowers.

## NURSING ECHOES.

An important position in the nursing world in Ireland, now vacant, is that of Lady Superintendent Nurse of the Belfast Workhouse Infirmary and Fever Hospital, an institution containing 1,600 beds. The commencing salary is £175, rising to £225, with uniform, rations, and apartments. There are also vacancies for Charge Nurses at a salary of £52 10s., with war bonus of £19 10s. and the usual emoluments. Full particulars will be found in our advertisement columns.

Many hospitals and infirmaries are now accepting V.A.D.s for a three years' instead of a four years' term of training. The fact is that "training" is restricted in the majority of hospitals and infirmaries to three years, and the fourth year exacted is one of skilled service in return for free training. We certainly think the patients benefit by this arrangement, otherwise a sufficient number of skilled staff nurses would not be procurable to supplement the ward sisters, but many complaints have reached us lately that the hospital authorities retain the certificates earned after the three years' course and examination until the end of the fourth year's service. This is not justifiable, and will no doubt in the future have to be discontinued. Imagine the feelings of the nurses who enter for training with V.A.D.s to find them awarded their certificates, won at the same time, and their own retained by the matron for a further twelve months. Just the sort of action which would encourage the whole batch to join a trade union. We are of opinion that every nurse should be handed her certificate with some degree of ceremony at the end of her third year of training. Surely honourable women are to be trusted to fulfil their contract of service. In the future, conditions may be so altered when registration is in force that nurses will not wish to hurry away from their Alma Mater.

The knowledge that most of the Women's War Service Units are now being rapidly disbanded, combined with the fact that in many offices the female clerical staff is being dispensed with in favour of demobilised soldiers, is doubtless causing much anxiety to many well-educated girls to whom the prospect of unemployment comes as a serious problem. A great number of these, however, might well turn their attention to a nursing career, for

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