

The Lords' Select Committee and Hospital Nursing.

THE following excellent leading article appeared in our influential contemporary, *The Hospital Gazette*, on July 9th. Nurses may well congratulate themselves upon the keen interest thus shown in their welfare by Dr. GEORGE BROWN, the distinguished Editor of our contemporary:—

"It would be difficult to overestimate the importance both to the medical profession and to the public, of the conclusions at which the Select Committee of the House of Lords has arrived, concerning the various nursing questions into which it made inquiry. The value of skilled nursing in the treatment of disease or injury is, of course, generally acknowledged, but, as we have on previous occasions pointed out, this very fact renders it essential that the education, the work, and the position of nurses should be accurately defined. In former days, when these attendants were practically unknown, or even with in recent times, when it was thought that education and experience were unnecessary preliminaries for the efficient performance of the duties of a nurse, there was no necessity for such delimitation. Now, however, some thousands of educated women have entered the profession of nursing as a life work, and their assistance has been so cordially welcomed by medical men and so appreciated

by the public that the demand for such workers is steadily increasing and extending. Coincidentally, as might, indeed, have been confidently predicted, it is a matter of common knowledge that large numbers of women who are qualified neither by knowledge nor character to act as nurses have undertaken the care of the sick.

On the other hand, there are even a larger number of nurses who, having gone through a short term of hospital training, and whose health or strength or capacity having been found wanting, drift into private nursing. Such generally prove themselves a terror to medical men and a torment to the sick. Possessed of that little knowledge which is such a dangerous thing, puffed up with conceit at the authority confided to them, they make endless mischief and work incalculable harm. Many of these women have, in a few hours, been known to set a whole household of servants in rebellion, to dispute the doctor's orders, and to endanger the patient's life by their combined carelessness, ignorance, and contempt of all authority.

Perhaps, hardly one of our readers has been fortunate enough to escape such annoyance in connection with so-called nurses, and there is undeniably also a very widespread sense of dissatisfaction upon the subject amongst the general public. The advantages of skilled nursing, however, being indisputable, especially as regards the maintenance of the hygienic and sanitary surroundings of the patient, the accurate fulfilment of medical directions, the exact and careful record of pulse, temperature, and the progress of symptoms, during the absence of the medical attendant, the assistance of the trained nurse will, doubtless, become more and more necessary. As we have frequently insisted the education of nurses, and the organisation of the nursing profession, are matters,

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