

of arsenic was being eliminated. Beyond the fact that arsenic was therefore being absorbed in quantities, probably sufficient to cause symptoms of poisoning, it was certain that quite enough was in the body to cause a gradual degenerative change in the kidneys. Altogether the evidence appears to be strong that, whatever may be happening elsewhere, in the United States at any rate, a number of people are taking considerably more arsenic into their systems than is at all good for them. The article to which we allude has elicited still further facts in the same direction; one observer, quoting two instances in which the hot air coming from a furnace was found to be highly charged with arsenic; and another physician not only corroborated this fact, but also pointed out that the ordinary silk used for lining coat sleeves, and common black cambric, were both very largely impregnated with the same poisonous material.

#### NAPHTHOL POISONING.

A very important case was recently published in a French contemporary which should be widely known considering the extent to which naphthol is now being employed in the treatment of skin diseases. This drug in the form of ointment of only two per cent. strength was employed in the case of two boys for scabies. It was effective in curing that troublesome affection, but was followed in both instances by the symptoms of acute inflammation of the kidneys, and one of the children died; so that the diagnosis was verified by the *post-mortem*. In other instances, in which the preparation had been used, obscure illnesses have followed, and it would, therefore, be well to remember that the absorption of the drug is rapid and cumulative, while the most practical point would be that the urine should be carefully examined before, during, and after the treatment; if, indeed, as many will think, the possibility of the dangers described does not altogether preclude the use of this preparation in medicinal treatment.

#### DEAF-MUTES.

A German contemporary recently published a very instructive article upon this subject. Taking a large number of cases of which he had obtained careful notes, the writer proved that it is almost as common for children to be afflicted with deaf-mutism after birth, as to be born with that condition. Amongst the causes of the acquired trouble, the various contagious and brain diseases are the most common—scarlet-fever, measles, and small-pox on the one hand, and meningitis on the other, being the most usual antecedent affections. It is a curious fact that at least one-sixth of the cases are first-born children, and it is somewhat unusual for more than one in a family to be similarly affected.

## Matrons in Council.

### PRELIMINARY EDUCATION FOR NURSES.



MADAM,—It appears to me that those Matrons who have contributed their opinions, to your columns, concerning Mrs. Strong's most interesting Paper, have wandered somewhat from the point raised by this lady, and also discussed by Miss Meyrick. Whether women who enter our Hospitals are more lazy and less clean than of yore was not the main point contested by Mrs. Strong. Rather does not this important paper (and we living far from the madding crowd cannot be sufficiently thankful for the formation of the Matrons' Council, which enables such free discussion upon matters of such vital importance to nurses and the public) deal primarily with Nursing economics? Is not the vital point brought forward whether, or no, Nursing, as a livelihood, is not worthy of a certain investment? There is no denying the fact that men, in all trades and professions, must pay, in time and specie, a certain percentage before they can command the knowledge and skill which will enable them to earn a living. Also, in many trades and professions, women in a lesser degree must do likewise. Why, may I ask, is the profession of Nursing to be exempted from the general rule? Nothing can be more demoralising to the profession, as a body, than to be bred on charity, and never be taught to appreciate the true value of a just basis of apprenticeship. The present condition of the Probationer Nurse who enters a General Hospital—paying nothing for her education, with no protecting contract between her and her employer (who may be a paid official or a vague and irresponsible committee), who accepts £8 per annum in lieu of a just contract—will inevitably develop into the type of Nurse with which of late we have become nauseated—women who simply “eel” through what they call three years’ “penal servitude,” and often, when certificated, adopt Private Nursing to the untold misery and discomfort of the community at large. Mrs. Strong demands preliminary education, and if preliminary education means that the Nurse Probationer must *pay*, and thus be taught the actual cost of *efficient* nursing education, by all means let us have preliminary education, for the type of women flocking into our Hospitals to-day will learn their lesson in economics by no other means. A poor friend once gave me a discoloured metal salver. I used it despitely as a platter for my dog, and wasted neither paste nor powder on its polishing. One day it caught the eye of a *connoisseur* in old silver, who peered into its intricate tracings until he discovered a mark. “Ah! a genuine old piece of George the II. silver. Very fine, very fine,” he exclaimed. “Worth £50! Will you sell?” “Sell the gift of a dear friend,” I indignantly replied, “certainly not! I value it too dearly.” “So it appears,” he significantly replied, eyeing its dents and dullness. Well! humanity is proverbially faulty, I own. I did not value the pewter platter of my poor friend, but I could appreciate and carefully cover in

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