

our influential contemporary, the *Medical Times*, has made some severe remarks upon the subject, which accurately express professional feeling upon this matter. In our judgment, it is much to be regretted that a professional journal should have descended into a region which, we believe, has hitherto been solely occupied by some illustrated periodicals devoted to the dissemination of police news. However, the chief effect has been to cast discredit upon the practice of massage, and thereby to create a considerable feeling of distrust on the part of the public as to the work of Masseuses.

It has been brought to our knowledge that this has inflicted a totally undeserved hardship upon a number of excellently-trained Nurses, and that, as one outcome of this, an Association has been formed for the purpose of uniting skilled operators in massage together, for the protection of their interests and for the improvement of their special branch of work. We cordially wish the new Association, concerning which we published a preliminary letter last week, all success in its endeavours to improve the practice of Massage and to assist by practical methods those who are engaged in that work. As a first step, we would suggest that means should be taken to dissuade persons who think of adopting the work from so doing, unless they possess a large amount of professional interest and support. The field is really a very limited one, and it is already more than amply supplied with workers, so that those who are still entering it, in such large numbers, have a most hopeless outlook before them.

We consider, moreover, that the work should be taken up only by those who possess a sufficient knowledge of Anatomy and of Nursing to render them really useful to their patients; and we hope that the new Association will make it an essential qualification for its membership that a knowledge of these matters should be possessed by every candidate. There is an immense variety in the certificates which are issued at present by various medical men and so-called training Institutions to those who have been instructed by them in the work of Massage; and we fear that it can hardly be denied that some of these testimonials which are dignified with the title of "Diplomas," are, even if not intended so to do, clearly liable to mislead the public into believing that their possessors are qualified to practice some distinct branch of medical science. It is to be hoped that the General Medical Council will take this matter into careful consideration, and that it will pass some such resolution concerning such certificates in Massage, as it recently adopted in the case of Diplomas awarded to Midwives. In place of this multiplicity of massage certificates, we hope that in future one uniform certificate will be issued

after due and careful examination by some representative body, and that this will become generally accepted by the profession and the public, as proof of the technical knowledge and ability of the possessor.

#### PECULIAR PEOPLE.

There has, for long, been a sect in this country to which the above title has been given, and which is averse to medical treatment on the ground that its members have religious scruples to aught except faith healing. It is impossible not to feel a certain amount of respect for people who carry their principles into daily practice, however mistaken these principles may be, or however unfortunate may be their results. But a new body of equally peculiar people are now arising who not only hold that it is wicked to employ animals in order to discover the working of disease or the action of drugs, but who go a step further and apparently have adopted the doctrine that it is entirely wrong to employ any new remedy for any disease at all, until the said remedy has been proved to be an invariable cure for that disease. The argument has a deliciously Hibernian flavour, and reads like an excellent joke; but it is almost incredible that it should be gravely advanced as a serious argument at the end of the nineteenth century. But such is the fact, for a considerable number of ladies and a few old women of the opposite sex recently approached the Metropolitan Asylums Board and denounced in the strongest terms the wickedness of certain medical men in daring to treat a most fatal disease—to wit, diphtheria—by a new remedy derived from the blood of that patient quadruped the horse; and the corresponding wickedness of a public body in furthering such treatment by material assistance. They actually argued that the doctors aforesaid should not be assisted to use the remedy complained of, because, being novel, it had not yet been shown conclusively that it cured diphtheria. The absurdity of such an argument is, however, counterbalanced by the serious fact that opposition should be made by such irresponsible humourists to the progress of treatment for the alleviation or cure of disease. It is impossible to believe that these people could have intended, or expected, to be taken seriously. But the opposition which they desired to evince is unhappily typical of the opposition which the same persons are continually making to the advance of medical knowledge, in other directions.

It is especially grievous that such efforts should have been made on the present occasion, because it is well known to medical men that in spite of the sanitary improvements of which this country is justly proud, the number of cases of diphtheria is very much greater to-day than it was five years ago, and that every year shows a greater and greater increase, not only in the number, but in the mortality of the affection. Considering that more than fifty children die from diphtheria out of every hundred who are attacked—and die usually a most painful death—it is a horrible sign of the times that faddists should be found to sacrifice to their desire to oppose anything and everything which does not entirely coincide with their own sentimental views, any efforts which may be made for the alleviation or cure of these little sufferers.

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