

THE VICTORIAN ORDER OF NURSES

This society, of which Lady Aberdeen is President, as well as the initiator of, is a scheme for celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of Her Most Gracious Majesty by the people of Canada. Any suggestion coming from Lady Aberdeen cannot meet with other than the greatest respect and attention, and a suggestion, to comprise a *Dominion memorial* of respect to our Sovereign at the present time, must speak forcibly to the loyalty and love of all Her Canadian subjects. But, though the intention is pure, and good, and solely for the benefit of her fellow-creatures, as all the desires of this most estimable lady are known to be, the scheme is one which requires close and scrutinizing consideration at the hands of the medical profession. Manitoba and the Northwest are specially pointed out as a field for the employment of the Victorian Order of Nurses, even the number probably required for this district is given, namely, sixty, with forty cottage homes, the salary for each nurse to be from \$400 to \$500 a year. Though no medical man could, or would, undervalue the services of a trained nurse, does not the Countess's idea strongly point to the conclusion of an inferior substitution, for educated and qualified medical men, by females, trained as nurses, pure and simple, competent in their legitimate spheres, the nursing of the sick, and the intelligent carrying out of the medical attendant's directions. But certainly not competent to assume the position, and responsibilities, of a qualified physician and surgeon. Again, is even a very strong-minded female, physically able to battle with the inclemency of a northwestern winter, and obey a sick call many miles distant at all hours of the night? Mention is made of using the railway lines and telegraph for the nurses in carrying on their work. Put the question to the medical men practising in Manitoba, and the Northwest, how often in their year's duties they have been able to utilize either railway or telegraph in the performance of them? And

the answer will show the uselessness of the idea, even were all the services placed free at the disposal of the nurses. Another strange remark in the announcement is, "The farmers are abundantly able to pay;" then where is the need of a charity costing \$27,000 a year? Unfortunately, as the books of country practitioners will show, the farmers hitherto have not been able to pay, but in this bright and sunny land we are always looking forward to the good time coming. In the various municipalities the country is divided into, there is no provision as, in Great Britain and Ireland, for what is there known as the parish doctor, who, on the requisition of a guardian, (here it would be a councillor) attends to the sick poor. Would not the Countess of Aberdeen's desire be more satisfactorily arrived at by placing at the disposal of each municipal council, a yearly sum for the remuneration of the municipal medical officer, for medical attendance and the supply of medicines to the indigent poor, and the fund might be appropriately called "The Victorian Fund of 1897?" The Victorian nurse scheme, so far as Manitoba and the Northwest is concerned, would, we believe, prove a failure, while a grant to the municipalities would be a great and appreciated boon, and would largely increase the number of medical men settling in country districts.

COFFEE-BLINDNESS.

Dr. Snaikén says: It is a well-known fact that the Moors are inveterate coffee-drinkers, especially the merchants, who sit in their bazaars and drink coffee continually during the day. It has been noticed that almost invariably when these coffee-drinkers reach the age of forty or forty-five their eyesight begins to fail, and by the time they get to be fifty years old they become blind. One is forcibly impressed by the number of blind men that are seen about the streets of the city of Fez, the capital of Morocco. It is invariably attributed to the excessive use of coffee.