

### AMATEUR NURSING.

The *Nursing Record* has lately had an article headed, "The Danger of Lady Probationers," in which it says that "owing to the present popularity of nursing, and the effect which has thereby been produced—of causing many ladies to enter hospitals as paying probationers, who, in former days, would have either sought their livelihood as governesses or companions, or, if not obliged to work for their bread, would have spent their days in ennui and their evenings in various phases of fashionable pleasure," and while contending that the continued presence of educated gentlewomen in the nursing world must tend to raise the tone of the workers and improve the quality of the work, the writer feels strongly "that the system at present in vogue foreshadows grave difficulties in the future. The objections are directed chiefly against the short period of probation or three months' training, and recognizes as a most serious evil the gross abuse which permits the authorities of hospitals to use paying probationers, admitted for three or six months' work, in the place of permanent probationers or of staff nurses. A graphic description is given of what it calls experimental nursing, and asks "what right hospital managers have to permit patients entrusted to their care to be experimentally nursed, and giving a suppositious but by no means unlikely example where an unskilled probationer succeeds a regular nurse who is called away to attend some critical case, and who supplies the gastric ulcer case, with the hot beef tea which the sufferer from homoptysis was ordered, and the one just conscious from the delirium of typhoid with the full diet dinners intended for the two convalescent chest cases in the adjoining beds, and then kindly assists the aneurism case to get out of bed. In conclusion a warning note is struck at the heads of those hospitals who are now pursuing this pernicious system of admitting unlimited quarterly probationers, and so keeping from their wards regular and settled workers, and warns them: that by so acting they are living on the crust of a volcano, for at any moment accidents

might happen which, coming to the knowledge of the public, would raise a storm of popular anger against those who had wilfully permitted such dangers to the sick, for whom they were responsible.

### THE RELATION OF SOCIAL LIFE TO SURGICAL DISEASE.

PART OF PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS BY D. H. AGNEW, M. D., PRESIDENT AMERICAN SURGICAL ASSOCIATION.

There is no tyranny more exacting or despotic than that exercised by the conventionalities which govern our living. All stages of life from infancy to old age are under its domination. It dictates the education, the manners, the walk, the dress, the forms of speech, in fine the whole being. Beyond all contradiction the behests of fashion are vastly more influential in governing public conduct, than any arguments drawn from the teachings of structure and function. As a rule, when the conflict is between taste and reason, the victory will be on the side of taste. In nothing is this more favorably displayed than in the apparel used to protect the body.

It is not an agreeable task to peer into the wardrobes or dressing rooms of our fair countrywomen. I have no special taste for exploring museums of bizarre collections; indeed, without a key to interpret the curious and ingenious mechanisms for clothing the form divine, such an exploration would be like an archaeologist attempting Egyptology ignorant of the cuneiform inscriptions. I have, however, some knowledge of human anatomy in its broadest sense, and when I look upon the masterpieces of the human form, whether in marble or on canvass, a Belvidere Apollo or a Venus de Medici, and contrast these with the dressed out specimens of modern women, I am forced to admiration; not so much at the amazing ingenuity displayed in concealing the divinely appointed form, as at the plasticity and patient submission of mortal clay under the despotism of a conventional inquisition. Were these processes of mutilation and abnormality harmless, did the body consist of a mere mass of proto-