pursue it by experimental research. The sections devoted to the sense of sight are especially full and interesting, and are well deserving of study. The illustrations are somewhat unequal in execution. For instance, the starch grains represented in the first figure are very roughly drawn, whilst in Fig. 3 the slit in the spectroscope should extend entirely across the aperture. The hæmin crystals in Fig. 7 are certainly not such as the student should be taught to look upon as typical examples. In Fig. 25 the execution is coarse, whilst Fig. 67 is out of drawing. These are, however, but small and easily remediable blemishes in an otherwise excellent treatise, which we can thoroughly recommend.

New Inventions.

AUTOMATIC FIREGUARD.

A SPECIMEN of Macmeikan's "Fireside Friend," which serves the purpose of an automatic fireguard and dumb waiter, has been submitted to us. The device appears to be at once ingenious, elegant, and useful. The illustrations give a fair idea of the modification of which the apparatus is susceptible. The guard is also made of another and larger pattern, in which it may be used as a folding fire

screen. Its chief advantages seem to be that (1) it is easily fixed on any grate by hooks, similar to ordinary fireguards; (2) it can be removed and placed upon the floor without risk of soiling the carpet; (3) by a slight movement of the foot the guard can be brought to a horizontal position, so as not to shield the fire; (4) it need not be removed to supply fuel

or attend the fire, but simply requires to be brought to the horizontal position as before described; (5) it lends itself conveniently to summer decorations by means of flowers, ferns, &c. The invention will undoubtedly be useful in nurseries and sick rooms, and may be obtained of John A. Macmeikan, 2, Short-street, Finsbury-pavement, E.C.

LONDON HOSPITAL. — Princess Christian paid a visit to this hospital on the afternoon of Feb. 25th, and walked through several wards and to the Nursing Home. Her Royal Highness spoke to some of the patients as she passed through the wards.

"THE TEACHING OF OUR NURSES."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Recently you published a letter from Dr. Allchin in which he comments in somewhat strong language on certain lectures delivered before the members of the Midwives' Institute and Trained Nurses' Club. Although I am not personally referred to by him, yet, as I have had the honour of lecturing before the members of this excellent institute, and as I take great interest in its welfare, I think I am within my rights in replying to some of the comments.

In this letter Dr. Allchin charges the medical men who have had these lectures reported in *Nursing Notes* with "advertising" (meaning, I suppose, placing their names prominently before the general public), and considers that the recent resolution of the Royal Colleges applies to their case. Now, the resolution distinctly limits itself to "journals professing to supply medical knowledge to the general public," and *Nursing Notes* in its issue of December, 1887, states that "it is not the intention of the editors to attempt to render this paper popular with the general reader. The topics treated of in *Nursing Notes* can never be suitable for any but women devoted to nursing the sick." Now, I do not think I shall be opposing myself to the opinions of many medical men when I state that, at any rate within the limits of time mentioned by Dr. Allchin (fifteen years), midwives and nurses have ceased to be charwomen, and have become as a body a well-trained and highly important branch of the medical profession, and, that being allowed, there can be no further objection to *Nursing Notes* publishing lectures delivered before the members of the Club mentioned, for the benefit of those nurses who have not been able to be present at the lectures.

As regards the subjects of the lectures, Dr. Allchin probably has allowed the fact of the Club being composed of midwives as well as nurses to escape his mind when he criticises them, but I should have thought that pneumonia would have been included in every course of nursing lectures, nursing being such a very important factor in the treatment. Nor can I think he quite means what his words imply, that nurses who are every day in contact with cases of pneumonia should know nothing about the disease itself. How can nurses be expected to carry out intelligently the prescribed treatment, and note the onset or occurrence of complications, without some previous training? and for this training it is, of course, necessary that there should be some instruction in the "fundamental structure and actions of the organs concerned." This is, I know, carried out in the teaching of the nurses of one of the great London hospitals, and I cannot understand how any lectures to nurses could be comprehended by them without this instruction. In my own lectures before the institution in question I have taken care to preface my remarks by a sketch of the parts concerned. I do not see how there can be any question as to whether nurses should also be doctors. Nursing requires too much special knowledge and training to leave time for nurses acquiring more than the rudiments of the knowledge requisite to be a doctor, and the more experienced a nurse is the more she knows how incompetent she is to take the doctor's place. A nurse such as the one criticised by Dr. Allchin for a question relative to the treatment of pulmonary embolism would be very unlikely to recognise that complication when it *did* occur, and even then, in common humanity, being the only person present who knew the extreme gravity of the case, should she not do what she could to prolong the life of her charge till the arrival of the medical man, who himself could do no more and no less? The other question he quotes shows, I consider, simply an inquiring and thoughtful mind, and as such I would have thought should be encouraged. Does not a nurse recognise and follow the strictest medical etiquette, and is she not constantly in a position where, by ignoring such, she would make it very disagreeable for the doctor, and perhaps lose him his patient, let alone the results to herself? A remark made to me with reference to Dr. Allchin's last paragraph is, I think, apposite: "That cooks have already been so over-trained that they have become very expensive articles, and command a much better wage than many a hospital sister."

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

Queen's-crescent, N.W., Feb. 21st, 1888.

F. R. HUMPHREYS.

P.S.—The paper itself is only to be obtained from the Editor, 15, Buckingham-street, Strand, unlike most other medical journals.—F.R.H.