

upon its private Register of Trained Nurses. It is perfectly plain that any of the ignorant women, or even bad characters, who now term themselves Trained Nurses, when asked for their testimonials of efficiency, could airily reply that they were trained at St. Thomas's Hospital, and, therefore, have no Certificate, but are "registered." They would know well that ninety-nine employers out of a hundred would not trouble to write to that Institution. It is needless to add that a Register, hidden in a dusty cupboard, to which the public has no access, as the only testimony to the professional qualifications of hundreds of skilled workers, is the most perfect invention which human wit and wisdom could have devised for enabling the unscrupulous to palm themselves off as Trained Nurses, to endanger the sick, and to bring disgrace upon the Nursing profession and upon St. Thomas's Hospital.

PROFESSIONAL PRAISE.

PROFESSIONAL jealousies are proverbial, and will doubtless endure so long as the world exists. The fact of the common existence of such feeling, however, throws into greater prominence, and immeasurably enhances, the value of professional praise on the rare occasions when it is ungrudgingly accorded. Nursing can claim to be no worse than other callings, if its members are accused of carping criticism upon their fellows, but it will be generally acknowledged that, if a large body of women workers combine to praise one of their number, such recognition must have been well deserved. We confess that when we learnt, some three years ago, that the Royal British Nurses' Association had instituted a Gold Medal of Merit for Nurses, we, as well as many others, entertained considerable scepticism as to the probability that it would be frequently awarded. The fact that three years have passed, and the matter has remained in abeyance, amply justifies that expectation. But events are moving on. The history of Nursing progress is being made with unexpected rapidity, and those who are making it are receiving, as they richly deserve, a just professional recognition of their labours. Sometimes, when we, with our special information, hear of impending improvements in this, that, or the other Hospital—when we observe how these are being effected amongst Nurses, as well as in Nursing matters, and remember that this great wave of reform only arose with the birth of the Royal British Nurses' Association, not four years ago—we marvel at how much has been done in so short a time. We understand that there is a strong feeling amongst Nurses that the Gold Medal should be presented now to one of those who are doing so much for their profession. One lady's name will, at once, occur to everyone—for to Sister HENRIETTA, of Kimberley, undoubtedly belongs the honour of securing the first

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legislation ever passed for Nurses—and all would recognise the justice of such a recognition of the immense service thus rendered to the entire Nursing world.

HOSPITAL PROMOTION BY PURCHASE.

It is just twenty years since Parliament practically abolished promotion by purchase in the Army—a system which, for generations, had caused immense personal injustice and national loss. Since then seniority, tempered by merit, has been the only stepping-stone to advancement. Keenly opposed as it was at that time, there is little doubt now expressed that the abolition of the system has been of incalculable benefit in promoting other, and equally necessary, military reforms and improvements. It was the logical outcome of the institution of Civil Service examinations, which threw open hundreds of valuable appointments to the best educated youth of the nation, entirely independent of their rank or poverty; in fact, the unmistakable tendency of the age, so far as the State is concerned, is to provide a fair field for all competitors, and to eliminate the nepotism, jobbery, and corruption which formerly flourished. And the wide and free admission of women to occupations which used to be imperviously closed to the sex, is yet another example of the same widely-spread sentiment and practice, although we deeply regret that in the Nursing world there is still great room for reformation in this respect. Unfortunately there are Hospitals so far behind the times—so entirely out of touch with modern ideas on this and other matters, or so interred—and hermetically sealed down—in their own petty proprietary vaults, that they perpetuate indefensible customs—merely because they are antique. One of the most glaring anachronisms thus cherished by these Institutions is the system of appointing as Sisters only those ladies who have entered the Hospital as Paying Probationers. Formerly, when the great majority of Nurses were of the domestic-servant class, and when a knowledge of Nursing was supposed to be acquired in some six or twelve months, there was perhaps some justification for the habit, because an educated gentlewoman not only was able to acquire the necessary skill, more easily than her ignorant and heavy-handed co-workers, but she was also a sufficient rarity in the ranks to be quite marked out for preferment. The world has moved on during these last fifteen years, but—to take one well-known example—St. Thomas's Hospital has stood still. While other Institutions have thrown open their superior appointments to the best amongst their Probationers—making proficiency in Nursing, in fact, the only criterion for advancement—it is believed that this, and another Hospital, still continue the old custom of appointing after a few months' experience, only their lady pupils to their superior posts—placing junior learners, as Sisters, over the heads of senior and thoroughly-experienced Staff Nurses—making the contents of their purses the measure of their success—and practically excluding from promotion those who cannot purchase it. In the Army, the system implied judicious jobbery; in Hospitals, it merely means superfine snobbery.

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