

Nursing Politics.

THE ROYAL BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

It has been arranged that a Public Meeting shall take place in St. Martin's Town Hall, Charing Cross Road, on Wednesday, October 13th, at 4 p.m., under the auspices of the Members' Rights Defence Committee of the Royal British Nurses' Association, when the reasons for the public inquiry which is now being demanded into the management of the Royal British Nurses' Association will be explained, and important Resolutions will be proposed—the full text of which we hope to be able to publish in due course. The subject is evidently arousing a large amount of public interest, and we are informed that a considerable number of influential members of Parliament have already promised their support to the demand for a Government inquiry.

WE reprint from the *Weekly Register* the following thoughtful article:—

"THE VOCATION OF THE NURSE.

"The nurse, who is not a Nun, has been a good deal discussed of late. The despatch of nurses to the seat of war in Greece, the publication of Mr. Caine's new novel, and the somewhat uproarious proceedings of the Nurses' Association, have been the occasion of articles, and of letters, in the papers. That nurses have grievances cannot be denied by those who have carefully followed events. Twelve and fourteen hours a day is too long a working-day for any human being, much more for one engaged in the task of tending the sick and dying. Nor for her arduous labour is the nurse at all generously paid. Many have been the hard sayings, and harsh judgments, uttered during the past few months concerning the personal character of the members of the profession: but these only prove the need of some legal means of protection by which the woman, who takes to nursing as a serious calling, may be secured against those who assume the garb under impulses less humane and less honourable. Every profession has its black sheep and its grey. But most of the professions have a remedy at hand. The nursing profession, however, is without any legal organization of its good name. Far be it from us to suggest that English nurses, in their endeavour to obtain a recognized *status*, should degenerate into a mere Trade Union. The *Spectator* suggests the danger, and warns the nurses against seeking 'to give as little time and energy to their work as possible, and to demand as large a remuneration, and as pleasant a time, as the general condition of the market (if we may use the term) will permit.' Of course, no nurse worthy of the name would think of so degrading her vocation; but, human nature

being what it is, the warning is not inopportune. The duty of the nurse will never be classed in the popular conscience with that, let us say, of the shop-keeper or mechanic. The nurse comes into relation with the human world under conditions most intimate and sacred; she takes her place beside the priest and the physician. The nature of her duties demands that the nurse should have, besides professional skill, a spirit of reverence and devotion such as we require in those who perform a sacred service. That is the same as saying that no woman should take to nursing who is not by character and disposition fitted for the higher responsibilities attaching to the work. Hence it is that the instinct of the Catholic Church has always regarded the office of nursing as of a peculiarly religious nature. To that office she has dedicated one Congregation after another of her Nuns. And the natural instinct agrees with that. Especially do the poor and the young look upon the nurse as sent by Heaven, an Angel rather than a thing of common clay, to whom they confide their heart-woes as simply as they expose their shattered limbs. Women who stand in such relationship with other human souls are foster-mothers of the human race, when, by their sympathy and conscientiousness, they nurse the minds as well as the bodies of their patients. Not idle, therefore, is any movement by which the profession may be shielded against whatever can degrade its dual character, or lessen confidence in its high mission."

It is with great satisfaction that we observe so able an article in the columns of a lay contemporary. It is noteworthy that as one journal after another touches upon, and investigates, the question of legal registration for nurses, the opinion of the press is almost unanimous in recognizing the justice of the demand for this measure. We commend this article to the thoughtful consideration of all who are interested in the question of justice for nurses.

Answers to Prize Questions.

WE have pleasure in announcing that the prize of one guinea, for the best answers to the prize questions, has again been gained by Miss K. S. Clark, M.R.B.N.A., as her answers, which we publish below, have been the best during the last three months. Although the answers we have received have, both numerically and in quality, quite come up to our expectations since we initiated this new department last January, we do not at present receive so many papers as we should like from those whom the questions were specially designed to help, namely, those nurses who are now training, and who need practice to enable them to write a good examination paper. We again

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)