

out during the time that should have been devoted to her education, to earn money for the institution. Is it to be wondered at, with such a levelling, with the competent confused with the incompetent in the eyes of the public, that the severe and continual criticism should fall upon the just as well as upon the unjust and that the nursing profession should suffer for the sins and shortcomings of those who should not be ranked as belonging to it. Our sympathies are divided between a long-suffering and much sinned against public and the genuine trained nurse. Such anomalous conditions have gone far towards bringing private duty into bad odour and as a result many of our best graduates prefer to remain in hospitals, at a much less income, because there they hold a definite recognized professional status, since in all hospitals worthy of the name the authorities recognize the necessity and importance of having trained nurses in charge of the nursing department, and the staff is made up either of graduates or pupils, no room or place remaining for nondescripts.

But with registration this unfortunate condition of things will be changed; the professional status of the trained nurse will be defined no less sharply than that of the physician or of the lawyer. By these means also the public would be provided with a distinguishing mark whereby they could know whether any given nurse has been properly trained, and is a suitable person to take charge of the sick; whereas in the absence of a public registry or of a physician to make the selection they are left without any guarantee of the efficiency of the various candidates. Again, since the medical profession must always wish to secure for their patients the best care, it will undoubtedly heartily endorse this further effort to increase and improve the efficiency of the nursing service. Lastly, as regards training schools themselves, the introduction of a legalized registration would naturally stimulate both schools and graduates to reach the required educational standard. Each school would be obliged to give the pupils a sufficiently thorough instruction in the theory and practice of nursing as would enable them to pass the examination prescribed by law, and obtain the certificate, which would authorize them to practise as trained nurses. These examinations could be conducted by properly qualified boards, the members of which would be largely drawn from those among the ranks of the trained nurses who have had special experience in such matters; who know what good nursing is, how it should be taught, and what standard is desirable and at the same time attainable.

Of course such a law would not be retroactive

and would not affect graduate nurses, who were already in the field, beyond requiring them to present their diplomas and apply for registration.

With this final step in our professional organization accomplished, we are then ready to set to work to some purpose to define our ethical code which belongs to the other side of nursing—the corrective of a too pronounced professional attitude, and which in its fulfilment rounds off our work.

Although we are nearing the completion of the last links of our national organization there are still others to be forged, by which we hope to unite ourselves in professional bonds with those of our own guild in other countries and become identified with woman's work at large all over the world, thus gaining additional breadth and strength for our own more specialized efforts. Last year you may remember, we were proffered the privilege of membership in the International Council of Women; this year we have a similar invitation from the International Council of Nurses, which is one of the outcomes of last year's meeting, and which in itself goes to show that American nurses are by no means alone in feeling the need for organization. Indeed the work that nurses are achieving along these lines in other countries makes interesting and inspiring reading and brings home to each one of us convincingly the importance of personal loyalty, personal interest and personal work, without which we can never hope to attain the full measure of success. If we do not take care of our own affairs, rest assured that outsiders will undertake the task for us to our everlasting undoing and to the detriment of the public, whose sick we have the privilege of ministering to.

Whether we shall take up or lay aside our professional responsibilities is not a matter of choice, but a question of duty and conscience. Do you think it right that any one of us, who has come to a clear understanding of the seriousness and importance of nursing work should go her separate way and take her own ease and pleasure while there is even one human life imperilled for the want of good nursing? Can we be still and let things just take their own way, so long as the stamp of mediocrity marks a work to which should be given the best and highest that the hands, hearts and minds of women can bring to it? This is no work that can be taken up lightly or laid aside carelessly by the first-comer, but one that should be entrusted only to women, each one of whom should be ordained a priestess, as it were, before she presumes to enter into the temple to perform her ministries unto sick and suffering humanity.

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