

but it must be pointed out that the present lack of organisation is cruelly unjust to well-trained nurses. Not only have they to compete industrially on equal terms with the half-trained or entirely unskilled women who are able to assume the same title as themselves, but they have also to bear the public distrust occasioned by the ignorance of such women.

#### THE SOCIAL ASPECT.

It is significant of the importance of the trained nurse as a factor of modern civilisation that her services are called for in many branches of work. She is to be found in Great Britain in hospitals and Poor Law infirmaries, and asylums for the insane; working in connection with the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute and other agencies in the homes of the poor; under Queen Alexandra's Imperial Naval and Military Nursing Services in hospitals at home, abroad, and in India; and under the Colonial Nursing Association in the Colonies of the Empire. It is noteworthy that all the above-named Services and Societies are governed by Central Boards. This system of government has been found productive of discipline, order, and, consequently, of prestige, and does for sections of nurses what would be accomplished for the whole profession by a Central Governing Body.

Events now passing before us show that the nations are awaking to the need of greater efficiency in labour of all kinds, and that the brain power of a nation is a priceless asset and demands all the help and encouragement which the national wealth can give it. The eloquent words of Sir Norman Lockyer in his presidential address to the British Association seem to be particularly apposite to our subject:—

"Statesmen and politicians will have in the future to pay more regard to education and science as Empire builders and Empire guardians than they have paid in the past. . . . We have not learned that it is the duty of a State to organise its forces as carefully for peace as for war; that universities and other teaching centres are as important as battleships or big battalions—are, in fact, essential parts of a modern State's machinery, and, as such, to be equally aided and as efficiently organised to secure its future well-being. . . . What is wanted is a complete organisation of the resources of the nation, so as to enable it best to face all the new problems which the progress of science, combined with the ebb and flow of population and other factors in international competition, are ever bringing before us. Every Minister, every public department is involved; and, this being so, it is the duty of the whole nation—King, Lords, and Commons—to do what is necessary to place our scientific institutions on a proper footing in order to enable us to 'face the music' whatever the future may be."

## State Registration of Nurses.\*

By EML AMBERG, M.D.

The State Organisation and State Registration of Nurses is a far more important subject than may appear on the first look. The first question which arises in the mind of the law-makers who will be called upon to formulate an appropriate law will naturally be: What are the reasons which induce a certain number of individuals to ask for a law along certain lines? For whose benefit will the law be? There does not exist any doubt that the question can easily be answered to the satisfaction of all those who are placed in the responsible position of law-makers, that the registration of nurses will, first of all, benefit the patients who will be under the care of the nurses, and in this way it will be a great factor in the interest of the welfare of the community. It further can easily be demonstrated that it will benefit that part of the community which is not suffering.

Experience shows that in sanitary matters of the most varied form, frequently the knowledge and judgment of nurses are appealed to, and in this way the nurses are a great educational factor in the community. Third, it can be shown that registration of nurses will also benefit the nurses themselves, but only in a more or less indirect manner, by elevating the standard of the nursing profession in general, and bringing the weaker portion of the profession to the point of efficiency acquired to-day already by a certain number of them. These three factors, while apparently separated from each other in some ways, are interdependent upon each other, as can easily be seen. To illustrate this, I may draw the following comparison:—

If you go to an uncivilised country, and need to engage the services of a physician, you must inquire who is an able physician and who is a physician only in name. All sail under the same flag. If you have no friend who can recommend you, you are helpless. If you are, however, in New York or any other civilised State and are in need of medical aid you are not helpless. You know the ever-watchful eye of the State is looking out. The State takes upon itself the duty to see that a physician *in name* is a physician *in fact*. This shows the difference between a civilised and uncivilised country. The same applies to any occupation and to any profession of which the standard cannot be judged by the laity, prominently to the profession of trained nurses.

You know that, *e.g.*, banks are under more or less stringent State control, also life insurance companies, because the average citizen does not understand the complicated system of those institutions.

\* Read before the Detroit Graduate Nurses' Association, March, 1904.

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