

requested a short account of the working of the Medical Act in Cape Colony as affecting nurses. I have no personal knowledge of the effect of legislation in Natal, but I gather that what I say applies there. I will endeavour to give a few impressions which may be of value, though they are very ordinary and matter-of-fact.

The legislation in the Act of 1899, Part II., section 4, affecting nurses, is gradually improving the education of nurses and raising the standard of professional knowledge. Nearly all the hospitals in British South Africa elect as Ward Sisters only nurses who either hold the diploma of Trained Nurse granted by the Colonial Medical Council, or, if educated outside South Africa, have certificates entitling them to register here. In this hospital we have a rule that "Ward Sisters shall be registered nurses under the Colonial Medical Act."

All the hospitals train their nurses with the view of entering for the Government examination at the end of their third year, and it has come to be the regular thing for a nurse to look forward from the beginning of her training to the Government examination as the completion of it, after which she can call herself a trained nurse. Many nurses who trained some years ago and neglected to take their diploma—it then not being the rule to do so—now find they cannot get work either in hospitals or private institutes, and have to turn to and work for their examination.

These facts show that the Act is working in the right direction, and perhaps it is better that it should be so doing in a gradual manner; thus the public opinion of nurses, and so later of the community, will not be far behind legislation. Then when we amplify and add to our legislation it will have the support of the profession and be effective, whereas if the profession and public are not ready to receive legislation it would be inoperative.

I will specify a few imperfections, or what I consider such, in our Act.

1. There is still nothing to prevent a woman untrained or partially trained from styling herself "Trained Nurse," and we have many such. Now, the Act should make the term "Trained Nurse" one which can apply only to a nurse who is registered, that is, to one who has had three years' training at a recognised school and passed the State examination or its equivalent. Anyone else using the term should be liable to prosecution. That is, we need a penalty clause. I may remark that I have used the term "Trained Nurse," but if the Council can suggest a better, that one will do. What we want is a term which will connote a proper training and examination, and which belongs to nurses and nurses only, just as the term Doctor of Medicine applies only to a medical man. In time the Sarah Gamp will be unable to enjoy the perfectly free use of a title which belongs only to the trained and certificated nurse.

2. We have no provision for the removal of a nurse's name from the Register should she be guilty of crime, or conduct "infamous in a professional respect."

3. I venture to suggest, even though I may tremble at the thought of what our Council would say to such a thing, that some at any rate of the members of the Council should be trained nurses, who could discuss and vote on nursing questions. Probably in time there will be a Nursing Council; some of these should

be trained nurses. At present the members of our Council are all men.

4. In the same way, I think the examination should be conducted in part by trained nurses.

The great gain which would follow from the two latter additions do not need to be pointed out.

The Cape Colony was among the first countries to enjoy State Registration for Nurses, but we do not enjoy the full benefits which ought to follow State Registration; that will only come gradually.

At this stage Miss Dock handed round for inspection no less interesting a document than the framed certificate of registration as a nurse granted by the Board of Examiners of the State of New York. Its interest was enhanced by the fact that it was the property of a German lady who had graduated in that State.

*Re Naval and Military Nursing.*—Numerous Memoranda were handed in, amongst them "The Nursing Directory," by the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, containing Regulations for the Naval, Military, and Indian Army Nursing Services of Great Britain and Ireland; "The Regulations for the Army Nurse Corps of the United States," by Mrs. Dita H. Kinney, Superintendent; "The Articles of the Geneva Convention, 1864"; "The Part of Woman in the Care of Sick and Wounded Soldiers" in England, Germany, France, Russia, Norway and Sweden, Austria, Italy, Japan, &c., by Dr. Roger Colomb, of Bordeaux.

*Re Registration.*—The Acts for the Registration of Nurses in Cape Colony and Natal, South Africa.

The Act for the Registration of Nurses, 1901; Syllabus of Subjects for Examination, and Register of Trained and Qualified Nurses, New Zealand, 1903.

The five Acts for the Registration of Nurses in the States of New York, Virginia, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Maryland, U.S.A., and the Form of Application for Registration of Training Schools for Nurses in New York State.

The Annual Report of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, 1903-1904.

The Bill to Regulate the Qualifications of Trained Nurses, and to provide for their Registration, drafted by the above Society.

LAVINIA L. DOCK, Honorary Secretary.

We shall report the Conference on Education in our next issue.

We hear that it is probable that a great number of persons will offer evidence to the Select Committee on Nursing. Twelve members of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses have already prepared a *précis*—amongst them Miss Isla Stewart and Miss Huxley. The Royal British Nurses' Association have nominated six witnesses, three medical and three nurse-members. No doubt the anti-Registrationists will also appear in force.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)