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Editorial.

LEGAL STATUS AND A DISTINCTIVE TITLE.

At the September Monthly Meeting of the Council of the Royal Victorian Trained Nurses' Association, considerable discussion took place as to the advisability of the adoption of the title of Sister, instead of Nurse, by private nurses. Dr. Fetherston said that "no doubt members would remember that in June last he mentioned this subject. . . . Since then he had been approached by a number of nurses who felt very keenly being put on a par with the ordinary nurse girl, who had not only taken the name nurse, but had adopted the uniform also. Trained nurses, who were proud of their profession, naturally felt aggrieved. He felt sure that if the Council gave their approval to the title Sister that it would soon become universal."

After considerable discussion, it was agreed that the October meeting of the Association should be set apart for the discussion of the question whether the title of Sister instead of Nurse should be used by nurses in private practice.

If the private nurses of Victoria think well to adopt the title of Sister, there is nothing to prevent their doing so. As Miss Glover pointed out, in the discussion above referred to, it is not a matter on which the Council should legislate, the nurses can and must please themselves.

Anything which helps to emphasise the dignity and responsible nature of a private nurse's work is good, and it may interest Victorian nurses to learn that the members of a flourishing nursing co-operation in London—the Registered Nurses' Society—have for the last ten years adopted the title of Sister. But trained nurses in Australia must not suppose that by adopting another

name they will abolish the evil of which they complain. The question at issue goes much deeper than that. As Miss Glover justly points out, there is nothing to prevent nurse girls from adopting the name of Sister, and we cannot too earnestly impress upon our Victorian colleagues that if they wish to be distinguished from any and every person who uses the name of nurse, and adopts the uniform of trained nurses, there is only one effective way open to them, that is to go to their State Legislature and ask for their legal status and some recognised title. This necessitates the definition of a standard of training and examination for trained nurses throughout the Colony in order that State recognition may be accorded to it, and, as such a standard has already been established, voluntarily, by the Royal Victorian Trained Nurses' Association, and is accepted by every hospital of standing in the Colony, it should be an easy matter to induce the State to recognise this standard and to confer the Diploma in Nursing, which would legalise the position of trained nurses and at once distinguish those who have given years of hard work to qualify themselves for their responsible duties from untrained and inefficient persons. The adoption of any other course is futile as a serious attempt to deal with the problem.

Dr. Fetherston states that the better the nurse the more she feels the indignity of present conditions. Nurses have the matter in their own hands. If they educate public opinion on the question, and then unanimously demand legislation, it is quite certain that they will, before long, obtain the recognition and registration which is their due as members of a skilled and important profession, and which is also imperatively necessary in the public interest.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)