

stituted by English law. The grand position Nursing therefore will take—and we believe very shortly take—among all the other occupations open to women must be evident to all, and can need no further argument to prove. And it plainly follows, from the great enhancement of the position held by Nursing, that the members of the new profession, one and all, will at once obtain the highest, because the most settled, place in the world of female workers.

But this is far from all. Not only will Nurses at once acquire a better social standing than they now possess as members of a legally-unrecognised calling, but they will individually obtain a definite legal status or position also. For example, at this date, any woman can call herself a Trained Nurse, and offer to tend the sick in such a capacity, without ever having set foot inside a hospital or even a sick room before, and therefore without possessing the slightest knowledge or experience of Nursing. No one can prevent her taking the title, or money from the public in consequence. No one can prevent her carrying her ignorance and incompetence into any household which believes her statement that she is verily a qualified Nurse, or punish her for the disasters which may result. No one can prevent such an one to-day from occupying the place and taking the profit only due to those who have honestly and laboriously gained true knowledge of the art.

But, given Registration, and what a marvellous change would occur. The title given by law would be upheld by legal powers, and a Registered Trained Nurse would possess a position which no untrained person dare assume, because the Register must be published, as we have previously pointed out, year by year; and were any woman, whose name did not appear on that State book, to obtain money by pretending to act as a trained nurse, she would render herself liable at once to a criminal prosecution for procuring money by fraud, for which a term of "hard labour" would, in such a case, be almost of a certainty awarded. The danger and risk—when detection would be so easy, and punishment so speedy, and probably so severe—would, it may be taken for granted, prove an effectual deterrent to any assumption of the title by any unqualified person.

The Registered Nurse, then, would possess a legal position exactly similar to that now held by members of other professions, and would obtain privileges and rights, therefore, comparable to those which they enjoy. She would, for example again, be protected against the competition of unqualified persons *to a certain extent*. We italicize this, because it must be clearly understood, and always remembered, that Nursing is, and must always be in some ways, a profession which is comparable in some respects to no other. The law will never insist upon a sick man

employing a trained nurse, any more than it will insist upon his employment of a qualified medical man. It will never dream of denying that he may be nursed by his friends or relations, for example, however innocent they may be of nursing knowledge. So, if he chooses an untrained woman to nurse him, or a quack or herbalist to treat him, the State certainly would not, and could not interfere. That is beyond dispute, we take it. To put it in other words, we believe that the law of England will never insist that only trained nurses shall tend the sick, any more than it will ever enforce the extinction and abolition of quacks and herbalists. But what it *will* do by Registration is to secure the public against fraudulent imitations in Nursing, even as it already protects it against fraud in the trade marks on merchandise.

So only to that extent will it protect the true members of the Nursing Profession against the false, by giving the public the power easily and certainly to distinguish between the trained and the untrained Nurse. But even this will be an enormous gain to the registered Nurse; for whereas the public demand for qualified attendance in sickness is increasing more and more, so there is no doubt that the amount of untrained assistance being offered to supply that demand is growing greater and greater, and consequently the competition to which really trained Nurses are exposed is becoming more and more severe, and the remuneration which the latter receive is being in equal measure reduced. Were Registration, however, in force, by the instant removal of this unfair competition every trained Nurse would obtain chances of employment and profit which at present are absorbed by her unqualified competitors.

We might enlarge on many other great advantages which must accrue to Nurses individually because of Registration, but the pressure on our space prevents us from saying more at present. Let us only draw together our conclusions so far:—Legal Registration will convert the calling of Nursing into a Profession—an inseparable adjunct to the noble Profession of Medicine—constituted, protected, privileged by the State; it will give every Registered Nurse a much higher social position than she, as a Nurse, holds now; it will give her a legal status as a member of a State-ordered profession that she has never hitherto possessed; it will raise Nursing to the foremost place in occupations open to women, because it will be the first female profession recognised by law—and this is but right, for all admit that Nursing is "woman's noblest work"; it must tend to diminish competition, and therefore enhance the work and remuneration each individual trained Nurse can obtain.

Without saying any more, is it not evident what enormous benefits Legal Registration will confer on the Nursing Profession and all its members?

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