

best intentions in the world, properly perform skilled work if she be altogether, or even partly, ignorant of its details? Would any sane man expect to be entrusted with the control of the simplest machinery used in the manufacturing world, unless he could prove that he possessed practical experience of its method of working, and could repair it, if injured? Imagine anyone applying to a manager for such a post, and saying, "I know your engines need great care and attention, and I have never seen any like them before. However, I am quite prepared to undertake the charge of them; and if, in my ignorance, I break, derange, and utterly ruin them, you can discharge me, and then I can offer to undertake equally unknown work somewhere else." Surely everyone would say such a man was a lunatic at large, and straightway hand him over to the safe custody of the police. And yet, in these closing days of this much-vaunted nineteenth century, week after week, month after month, the care of the most wonderful machines in the whole wide world—human bodies—is being calmly undertaken by women who know no more how to tend them, than the unborn babe knows how to drive a locomotive! Most ridiculous of all, it is when the machinery is already out of gear, and the wheels are running heavily—when, therefore, all the greater skill is required to correct the evil, or prevent further damage—that the moment is chosen to toss sick people into the hands which could not sustain or help them when in robust health! The public is realising slowly the crass absurdity—nay, the wanton wickedness—of this procedure; and just as it is more and more seeking the aid of nursing in illness, so it is more and more clearly understanding that unskilled nursing, in dangerous cases, is worse than none at all. Examples must occur to the mind of every trained Nurse in which ignorance of the commonest knowledge of nursing matters would enormously increase the suffering, and, perchance, endanger the life of the patient. Let us narrate but one case, out of scores, which now occur every week. A man in good health was burnt over the upper part of the body and arms, the severity of the case only depending upon the large extent of the injured skin. A nurse was procured, who informed the doctor that she was fully trained, and he—overworked, and obliged to be trustful—ordered zinc ointment, and, knowing that with care there was no danger, left the patient with a quiet mind. He was much astonished, therefore, on his visit next day, to find the patient in a state almost of collapse, which only yielded to stimulants and other active treatment, after great trouble, and for which no cause could be discovered. The following day, however, the doctor arrived just in time to see this scene, and understand at a glance the previous mystery. The patient was sitting up in bed—every scrap of injured surface freely exposed to the air—shivering and groaning

with the consequent pain, while the nurse cheerfully sponged the charred skin *quite* clean, and expatiated upon the many cases she had seen, most of whom, curiously enough, seemed to have departed this life under her ministrations! It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to say that the patient had an attack of pneumonia, and only recovered by the "skin of his teeth," and that inquiries subsequently made about the Nurse, proved that she had come to town from a provincial Nursing Institution which had engaged her under stress of work with no definite knowledge of her antecedents. Similar instances might be multiplied, but the slightest consideration given to the matter, would sufficiently prove the necessity of only confiding the care of the human frame to those who, by careful training and experience, have learnt how fearfully and wonderfully it is made, and, therefore, what care and attention it requires when its machinery is out of gear. We are well aware that the common sense of the English people is forcing this matter forward, and realising the ridiculous absurdity of demanding skilled workers in every other department of science except in the cure and nursing of the sick. It then only remains to answer one most pertinent question: "Would Legal Registration give the public any security against ignorant and incompetent Nurses?" We say that most unquestionably it would do so, and we go further and add, that it would to a large extent guard the sick against *careless* nursing also. For Carelessness is the eldest child of Ignorance, and where Knowledge reigns, Ignorance and all its tribe can have no place. Moreover, Registration, as we have frequently said, gives to the qualified Nurse a position and a title she has never before possessed, and of which she would certainly be most careful not to risk the loss; while any unprofessional conduct, such as gross carelessness, would certainly entail it.

But again, Registration would afford to the public, a State guarantee that no ignorant or incompetent woman would, in future, be able to style herself, or offer her services, as a Trained Nurse, because no woman's name would, after the first formation of the Register, be placed thereon, who had not given the clearest proofs of her efficiency and character. And in this connection it may be added, that all experience of such matters proves that the tests which will be imposed upon candidates for Registration will grow more and more stringent as time goes on, and that any dereliction from duty on the part of the Registered will also be more and more heavily punished. And this must tend in greater and greater measure to purify the ranks, and raise the general professional standing. The advantage of this, in every way, to Nurses is self-evident; but its extraordinary importance to the public is so manifest, that it is surely unnecessary further to enlarge on the enormous advantages it will gain, from the legal Registration of Trained Nurses.

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