

raised to the true dignity of a profession, women of skill and ability would make a Nursing reputation as surely as Doctors make a Medical reputation, and find, like them, as noble a sphere of duty in the world as in the Ward.

It cannot be too often reiterated that, in the Nursing industry, the interests of the employer are above and beyond those of the employed, for until the Nurse has a definite position, her employers, lay and Medical, can have no definite protection, nor can Home Nursing be raised to a position commensurate with its supreme importance. It is essentially the profession of a gentlewoman; it demands some of the best qualities of womanhood, and a winsome sympathetic manner would do more to popularise skilled Nursing amongst all classes of society than anything else, for well we know that in Home Nursing the breakdown is not so much the Nursing as the Nurse. I earnestly commend this matter of skilled Nursing to the consideration of my countrymen and women; it is a matter personal to them all. Your cook may spoil your dinner, or your milliner your frocks, and you have cause for displeasures; still they are only matters of transient concern. But the unskilled Nurse, or the hastily summoned makeshift, for whose qualifications you have not the slightest guarantee, may spoil for ever a life far dearer to you than your own!

Having shown the vital importance to the community of skilled Nursing, I would point out the difficulties that lie in the path of a Nurse, when she takes up an independent career, and consider how they can best be overcome. I assume then that a woman of education, high character, and fair position in life, has voluntarily and earnestly selected Nursing as her means of livelihood, not with the intention of passing her working days within the little world of a Hospital, but of turning her skill and knowledge in due time to advantage in the far greater world without. Now, to this end, she will have to undergo a complete course of Hospital training, and pass a scientific examination in theoretical and practical Nursing; time and experience will then alone be required to give the finished skill that marks consummate excellence. I earnestly counsel thoroughness in the training, and I consider five years of Hospital work none too much for a Nurse who intends to take up the grave responsibilities and duties of external Nursing.

We are told, and justly, that Nursing is a Profession, but under the existing order of things the Nurse is professional by courtesy only, and at the very outset of her career has to seek extrinsic aids to help her on. Her shelter will more likely be some sort of "Home"; her resources a "Registry Office," or medical patronage—good things in their

ways, but neither just nor satisfactory to a woman capable of taking such an important place in the community as a skilled Nurse.

What is to be done? As a preliminary step, she had better join the B. N. A., thoughtfully, loyally, but not blindly; having a clear idea how far her professional interests and position will be promoted by so doing. Do not look upon the Association as a sort of "Benefit Club," a "Society for the Relief of Distressed Nurses"—laudable objects enough, but it is not for such as these, that influential support and august patronage have been invoked. One of the first aims of the Association will be to promote some scheme of authorised Registration for Nurses—a step in the right direction, as tending towards incorporation by Royal Charter, which alone can make Nursing in fact, as in name, a profession.

The first practical outcome of incorporation will be Legal Registration, and we shall have a Nursing List, as authentic in its way as the Medical List, which, by a little common-sense business arrangement, could be disseminated all over the kingdom, and then the public would only have themselves to thank if they employed Nurses who were not Registered. This measure by itself will at once place the Nurse in a true professional position, and put the Nursing profession (as it then will be) in the hands of women of tried ability, as well as great technical skill.

Nursing is not all sentiment, any more than any other profession. Ideal qualities are not to be demanded from a Nurse any more than from a Doctor, and both have to live by their work. It is most important for the public that they should be protected against the serious risks that attend the employment of unskilled and unqualified Nurses, and the only practical way to do that, is to give them a legal status.

The familiar objection, that the case of Nurses is not at all analogous to that of Doctors, has been so ably met in the pages of the *Record*, that I can only emphasize the irresistible arguments against it by metaphor. Green, blue, and orange are not primary colours, but complementary to them, and together they make up the beauty and harmony of the spectrum. Good Nursing is complementary to good doctoring, and both are equally essential for the proper care and treatment of the sick, and it is in the highest degree necessary for the protection of the public that the Nurse should have as definite a professional position as a Doctor. The old lines of medical practice are fast falling in; the Physician is no longer the "Mystery Man." The important factors of hygiene, regimen, appliances—all of which lie in the domain of true professional Nursing—are coming to the fore; and the aim of modern medical science is rather to aid recovery

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