

and civic rights of Nurses is quite untenable at the end of the nineteenth century. We have consistently and stedfastly asserted that Nurses are citizens with the self same rights as those possessed by all other British subjects. We contend that their calling has now assumed such importance in its relations to medical men and the public, that it is essential that their education should no longer be continued on the haphazard, slipshod systems which have hitherto been, and even now are, recognised and permitted. The time, we consider, has fully come when order should take the place of the existing chaos in the education and training of Nurses, and the first effect of the Nursing Act of Parliament would undoubtedly be to bring about that definite standard and system of training which would be of incalculable benefit to every member of the Nursing profession. This undoubtedly would be a primary advantage of legislation to Nurses, and the effect upon every member of the calling would be immediate and most beneficial.

Then it is notorious that at present the Nursing profession is totally without control or discipline. Anyone, however ignorant, can term herself a Nurse; any Trained Nurse who discredits her calling can continue to do so without let or hindrance. Now it must be clearly understood that inasmuch as legal powers of control over education and subsequent discipline can only be conferred by Act of Parliament, so legislation is essential in order that reforms could be made in these directions; that reforms are urgently needed it is impossible anyone to deny, and that legislation would therefore be of incalculable benefit to Nurses is fully beyond all dispute or question.

In brief, then, such an Act as we have briefly sketched in detail, would form Nursing into a profession—recognised and governed by the State—as other skilled callings already are. The increased efficiency and discipline of the calling would inevitably raise the public estimation in which its members would be held, and incidentally this would cause a further improvement in the *personnel* of the profession, seeing that, on the one hand, more educated women would be induced to enter the calling, and, on the other, that there would certainly be developed a greater amount of *esprit de corps* amongst Nurses than at present exists. Then the advantages of discipline and of the removal from the recognised ranks of the calling of all those who brought discredit upon it and upon their fellow-workers, would be of incalculable benefit to well-trained women who are now confused in the public mind with many who wrongfully assume, and who frequently discredit, the Nursing garb. From all this there

would arise the practical advantage that Nurses more carefully selected, more systematically educated, and more efficiently controlled, would be able with a success hitherto impossible, to unite and co-operate together for the advancement of their calling and for their own individual benefit. It would, for example, then become impossible for private Nurses to be “sweated” by various institutions; and the co-operative principle which has had so rapid and so complete a success would necessarily receive a still greater and more general development than is at the present moment possible. There are surely few Nurses who are unable to realise the importance of belonging to a profession which would occupy the advantageous position thus briefly outlined—benefits both theoretical and practical, both professional and individual.

But while the privileges of Nurses and their legal status would be greatly raised by such legislation as we have assumed, it is necessary that they should understand that their responsibilities would be at the same time enhanced. It is, finally, to be hoped and expected that a keen interest in their profession in which, unfortunately, so many Nurses are now deficient, would be speedily and at once developed; because if that were so Nursing work would be greatly improved. It would then be impossible that a woman registered as a member of the Nursing profession should feel little or no interest in the progress of knowledge, in the progress of education, in the progress of efficiency and of good discipline, amongst the other members of her calling.

CORSET DISEASE.

A FRENCH medical contemporary has recently devoted considerable space to the discussion of certain cases to which it gives the generic description of Corset Disease. Its conclusions are remarkably corroborated by the excellent articles on Physical Decadence amongst American Women which are at present appearing in our columns from the pen of a distinguished American physician. There can be no doubt that what is unnatural may always become dangerous, and the deformity of the human form produced by tightly constricting corsets is only the outward and visible evidence of even greater deformity and displacement of internal organs. There is, however, in this country, very powerful forces at work against the constrictive bands of the corset. The greater development of out-door exercises amongst women has of necessity caused a corresponding change in the shape and style of their apparel, so as to secure greater freedom of bodily movement than was formerly considered to be necessary. Lawn tennis dealt a serious blow to tight-lacing amongst English girls, and the bicycle, it may be hoped, will save the present and perhaps future generations from suffering from Corset Disease.

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