

Even at the present day, however, and despite the great improvements which have been made in the efficient education of Nurses, there are two great reforms required. It is still possible for any woman, however ignorant or untrustworthy she may be, to obtain forged or spurious certificates, and under cover of these to obtain work as a Nurse, not only to the detriment of medical treatment, but often also to the direct loss, if not to the actual danger, of the sick. There is still wanted, therefore, some public guarantee of the training through which Nurses have passed—in other words, that the system of Registration which, as a voluntary measure, has been initiated and carried on by the Royal British Nurses' Association, should be made more or less compulsory and conducted under legal powers. Then, any medical man could by the purchase of the current Register of Nurses, discover at a glance whether any given woman were a trained Nurse or not; and, in the former case, precisely what Hospital training she had undergone.

But beyond this there is the still more important question of professional discipline. At present, not only can any woman term herself a Trained Nurse, however unworthy she may be to assume the title, but any Trained Nurse, however untrustworthy she may have proved herself to be, can continue to obtain work—and perhaps again and again abuse the confidence reposed in her by medical men—upon the strength of her old Hospital certificate. It is beyond all dispute that there should, for the benefit of the other members of the Nursing profession, as well as of medical men and of the public, be some means of control and discipline, so as to secure the removal from the recognised ranks of the calling of those women who bring discredit on the work of Nursing, and upon all their fellow Nurses. Other professions are able, by such means, to exclude the black sheep which disgrace their callings, and it is earnestly to be hoped that Nurses will soon be afforded an equal measure of self protection, and that doctors will therefore be afforded a corresponding safeguard against untrustworthy assistants.

To medical men, the formation of a State Council, which would have such disciplinary power over Nurses, would have a further and inestimable advantage. At present, it is well known that if a Nurse proves herself to be utterly unworthy of the confidence reposed in her, and is dismissed from the Institution which employs her, she often finds but little difficulty in obtaining work through another agency, to the further annoyance or injury of medical practitioners and the public. To have, therefore, such a Board as that which we have

assumed would be formed by a Nursing Act, to which medical men could report grave derelictions of duty on the part of a Registered Nurse, would in two-fold measure assist the medical profession. It would cause the speedy punishment and practical elimination from the Nursing ranks of those who proved themselves to be unworthy to be entrusted with the care of the sick. And it would afford to a certain class of Nurses a special reason, which does not now of course exist, and indeed which without some controlling disciplinary power could not exist, for being anxious to maintain at as high a level as possible their professional reputations. In both ways it is unnecessary to point out how greatly the medical profession would be benefited. In every way, therefore, such legislation as we have anticipated would prove to be of direct importance and assistance to every medical practitioner.

A THEORY IN PROFUNDIS.

A GERMAN is nothing if he is not philosophical, nor is his philosophy anything if it be not abstruse—not to say metaphysical. It is therefore not astonishing to learn that a well-known German professor at a recent meeting of the Alpine Club in Zurich, delivered himself of the weighty pronouncement that "one of the most convenient, elegant, and agreeable of all manners of death is that which follows a fall from some Alpine height." Professor Heim has further arrived at the conclusion that there is neither physical nor moral suffering in being hurled through space, but only what he is pleased to describe as "a delicious fine taste of the celestial beatitudes." How the learned professor has acquired his knowledge, either of the elegance or agreeableness of being hurled through space, or of the "celestial beatitudes," we would not venture to inquire. But it is at any rate not unfair to question if he has correctly estimated the actual sensations of a person who has fallen from an Alpine cliff. It is generally believed that those who drop from an immense height die from cessation of breathing, but so far as we are aware no proof has ever been produced to justify the theory. Those persons who, for example, have fallen from considerable heights from a balloon into the sea and thus have had the force of their fall effectually broken have in several instances retained their consciousness and have escaped death from drowning by their own exertions. It would appear, indeed, to be much more likely that unconsciousness may occur from syncope when falling from a height, but that actual death is caused by the crushing effects when the body reaches the ground, and that instead of the "delicious fine taste" during the previous proceeding the falling person probably experiences the concentrated emotions of terror and exhaustion in the most horrible form. There is undoubtedly a serious side to such utterances. It is well known that there are already more than enough suicidal falls from Alpine heights without the additional inducement being held out to those who thus desire to shuffle off their mortal coil, that it is a "convenient, elegant and agreeable" method of so doing.

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