

"Literary Studies," by Joseph Jacobs. (London: David Nutt.)

"The Keeleys: on the Stage and at Home," by Walter Goodman. With portraits and other illustrations.

"In Search of Quiet," by Walter Frith. (London: Smith, Elder & Co.)

"A Master of Fortune," by Julian Sturgis. (London: Hutchinson & Co.)

"The History of the Paris Commune," by Thomas Marsh. (Swan Sonnenschein & Co.)

Frankfort Moore's successful novel "Phyllis of Philistia."

Coming Events.

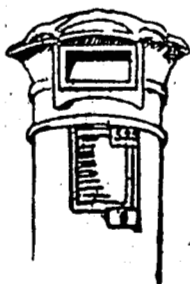
January 21st.—Meeting of the Provisional Committee of the National Council of Women, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, at 11 a.m.

January 23rd.—The third of a course of six lectures on the "Nursing of Nervous Diseases," by W. S. Colman, Esq., M.D., "Chorea, Delirium and Hysteria," 3 p.m., at the offices of the Royal British Nurses' Association, 17, Old Cavendish Street, W.

January 23rd.—Quarterly Meeting of the Matrons' Council, Matron's House, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, E.C., 3 p.m.

Conference, the Medical Societies' Rooms, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square. Address by Dr. Bedford Fenwick, on "The Prospects and Principles of Legislation for Nurses," 8.30 p.m.

January 28th.—Special Meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association, 20, Hanover Square, 4 p.m.



Letters to the Editor.

Notes, Queries, &c.

Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not IN ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.

STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—The important editorial article in the last number of your interesting Journal is so full of the spirit of enthusiasm in the good cause of obtaining State recognition for Trained Nurses, that criticism, however well meant, from an outsider like myself, almost suggests an attempt to hamper the movement rather than to assist it. If I might be permitted to offer a few remarks upon such an important subject as State Registration of Trained Nurses, I should in doing so endeavour to look ahead and indicate what the outcome of legislation may be, and at the same time mention a flaw or two that may occur to render the legislative results rather less glorious than the enthusiastic leaders of the movement may at present be anticipating. I shall base my remarks upon the experiences already obtained in the matter of State Registration in the Medical and Dental professions. At the outset, however, I must confess it is most gratifying to find that the keynote of the whole movement is struck, and in no hesitating manner, when you say, in your leading article, that it is "for the protection of the public" a Nurses' Registration Act should be passed by Parliament. If there be any magic in words that can help forward your cause in Parliament, it will, most assuredly, be found in the sentence quoted.

Now, let it be assumed that Parliament grants your request. What follows? An Act, which I will, for the nonce, call the Nurses' Registration Act. What will the Act do? It will enable the public to distinguish between the Trained and the Registered Nurse, and the Unregistered, and presumably Untrained, Nurse. It will not prevent Untrained Nurses practising as Nurses, and it will not prevent anyone who chooses to do so, posing as a Nurse; but it will prevent any person other than a Registered Nurse using a title. And just as I assumed the name of the Act, so I will now that of the title it confers, and call it "Registered Nurse."

The Untrained and Unregistered person, a "Sairey Gamp" for instance, may call herself a Nurse, but not a "Registered Nurse."

The importance of all this will not be noticed in the first flush of victory, and possibly not for a few years after the Act, establishing Nursing as a profession recognised by the State, has come into force; but in time the pinch of competition in the struggle for existence will assuredly come, as it has come in the Medical and Dental professions, and many others, possessing Acts of Registration; and then the "quack Nurse" will appear, and underbid the Registered Nurse, besides degrading the profession of Nursing in many and various ways. The gullibility and general apathy of the British public on all professional questions of this sort are proverbial. No help need be looked for, therefore, in that direction. At such a moment, the State-recognised Nurse will probably ask the question, What use is the Act to me if anybody can practise as a Nurse, and also filch my title away, and in so many different ways, that the public are unable, from their very apathy, to understand the difference between being Registered or not? This is the question doctors and dentists are asking themselves to-day. And it is not to be for a moment supposed that any Government will pass a Bill for Nurses, with provisions in it anything like so stringent as those existing in the Medical Acts. Consequently the bitter cry will be all the more intense from them.

I will give two more illustrations of what may be expected to result from legislation for Nurses—one before, and one after, the obtaining of an Act.

The practice of Parliament, in passing Acts of Registration, is to allow a period of time, e.g., a year, to elapse after such passing, and before the provisions of the Act come into force.

During this time it will be perfectly competent for any "Sairey Gamp," who thinks she can nurse, to pay the Registration fee, and become a duly qualified, or State-recognised Nurse. Hordes of so-called Nurses may be expected to register under such conditions, and particularly as it will be generally noised abroad that Nursing is at last becoming a recognised profession, and that the doors of a profitable occupation for women and others are about to be closed against all who cannot produce certificates, or evidences of training, entitling them to be registered.

As a justification of this assertion, I may mention that it is well known when the Act for the Registration of Dentists passed, some five thousand persons registered, less than one thousand of whom were trained dentists, or for that matter, knew anything but the merest smattering of the very elements of the profession.

As an illustration of what may occur after the Act of Registration for Nurses is passed, I will mention the formation of bogus Nursing Associations or Companies. The Act will be powerless to protect the public against any such bodies. For example, it will be perfectly competent for any seven people to form themselves into a Company and call it, say—"The English Nurses' Association Registered," and under this guise of deceit they may employ dozens of people untrained, trained, and even Registered Nurses, to practise Nursing all over the kingdom. And there is no law to prevent them.

So much, therefore, for pessimistic criticism. Notwithstanding what has been said, is the attempt to procure an

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)