

the claims of professional erudition—and to place upon a proper basis alike the increment of her wage and possible results of saving habits in the financial protection—by pension—of inevitable and perhaps premature old age. She goes from case to case at the beck and call of each fresh need, on the order of those to whose Central Establishment she belongs. She is usually well treated, is often overworked and seldom over-paid. Her future ought not to be left to the Workhouse possibilities of bad luck and mischance. Registration is becoming imperative, for there has arisen, in the land, in the last few years, a pseudo-development of so-called massage which is supposed to be a system of medical treatment, in the performance of whose 'duties,' women, dressed as Nurses, disgrace the Nurse's calling, and against whose compromising practises proper registration rightly-conducted is the only reasonable protection. And it will come to this, that the Nurse will have to be officially recognised by examination and diploma, and that the State will have to treat as misdemeanants those who mis-describe themselves—and a properly constituted body on the lines of the Incorporated Law Society (I regret to say there is no equally drastic and impartial medical tribunal) will have to publicly disgrace those who after registration misconduct themselves. The overcrowding of the profession of Nursing is becoming too plain fact to be much longer ignored. And it seems to me that the only possible remedy is in the selection of candidates by a recognised and authorised examining body which shall gradually raise the standard of the 'test' and which shall not ignore, as part of that test, the *physical* fitness of the Nurse-applicant. I say this because I am quite sure that many young women are nursing to-day by the mere dominion of their unfairly-taxed nervous systems over their utterly unfit (for the work) bodies. And this is wrong—wrong for the Nurse, wrong for the race, wrong for the patient. I would most certainly put the rigid physical examination first. I would not leave the Nurse to spend money on her training which a subsequent physical examination might prove to be wasted. That unfair policy is the object-lesson to-day of the treatment by the War Office of the British parent, and is not a creditable instance of fair-dealing. Certainly it is not an example we need follow. Because the State allows a father to waste hundreds on the education of a lad who is 'physically unfit' and will only declare him to be unfit physically *after* the waste of such money, and not before it, is just why the future Examining Body for the Nurse's Diploma should set the world a better and higher and more merciful and even expedient example."

Nursing in Germany.

THE following interesting letter, from the pen of Miss L. L. Dock, appeared in this month's *Trained Nurse*:—

Having always denounced as inexpressible egotists the people who, after making short trips in other lands, come home and write articles about them, I now find there is such an irrepressible temptation to commit this same fault, that even the dread of falling under my own condemnation cannot deter me from being guilty of it. I have seen so much that is interesting in Germany and England, in nursing matters, that I want to tell our nurses something about it.

Germany comes first, both in my observations, and because it is from the German forms that the English and our own nursing systems have developed. I think this is a correct statement, for while it is true that the great English philanthropist and reformer, Elizabeth Fry, was the first to arouse that spirit of reform in hospital management and the care of the sick in institutions which finally culminated in Florence Nightingale, yet the training of the latter at Kaiserswerth, and her establishment of the first training school at St. Thomas, which became, to a certain extent, the model for all others, gave the English schools, in modified forms, something of the organization and discipline of the great Fliedner.

It is most interesting to see, in full working order, a system as far removed as the poles from ours in the one principle of individual freedom, but like it in outer conformation, and containing all the germs of those changes which we have made. Then, too, there are to be found in Germany so many degrees, shading from their strictest orders down to organizations which are nearly free, that one can find there examples of nearly every stage passed through, in the development from the old religious orders of the Middle Ages to our modern profession of trained nursing. The very last stages of all are not found in Germany, nor yet even in England; I mean the organization and co-ordinated life of the graduate nurse, upon which we, in our alumnae associations and national union, are now beginning to enter.

It is to be remembered that we nurses are descended in a straight line from the old conventual orders. In times not so very remote, no hospital nursing was done except by religious sisterhoods and brotherhoods. The hospitals were closely connected with the churches and were always built near them.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)