

value your patients' lives and your professional reputation, help hospital nurses to raise their status by honest certification, together with the registration you insist upon in your own profession.

In conclusion, let me urge upon every woman, more especially upon every woman having a profession, unceasingly to work for political enfranchisement. You can have no idea what a difference it will make to your interest and your status when once it is an accepted fact that women and men have equal electoral rights as citizens and subjects of the Queen.

As a politically enfranchised New Zealander, and one who has carefully studied the growth of public feeling there, during the six years that have elapsed since the enfranchisement of women, I unhesitatingly affirm that English women's political recognition and the gradual removal of their educational, professional, and civic disabilities—barriers erected by sex prejudice only—must come before long. The logical persistence of justice works steadily towards this progressive step, and it only remains for English women with equal persistence to move on hand in hand with justice and logic, and to show their readiness to take each advancing step.

#### STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSES AT CAPE COLONY.

By MISS M. H. WATKINS.

I HAVE been asked to touch upon the condition of professional nursing in South Africa, dealing especially with State Registration for nurses.

So much has been written, and so ably written and said, of late years, on the subject, notably in the *Nurses' Journal*, August, 1892, that it would be difficult to find anything fresh and interesting. Each year, as civilization increases, the difficulties surrounding the nurse, both in hospital and private nursing, decrease. Nursing is able to be carried out much the same as in European countries. There is always the extra difficulty of heat, and the contention with dust; but these difficulties can be overcome, as is, also, the old prejudice against the trained nurse. Well-trained nurses, and only well-trained nurses, for their own sakes, as well as that of the patients, should be sent to South Africa. In no place do incompetent workers of all kinds find more difficulty in earning a living.

To pass on to Registration,—As far as I can remember, the Act of Registration was passed in 1892. To whom we are indebted for leading the movement, I do not know; but I think to Dr. Beck, of Rondebosh, and Dr. Hermann, then of Cape Town. I am happy that Registration is an established *fact* in the Cape Colony, from

which all nurses to-day are reaping the benefit. There was no serious opposition by any medical men. They were feeling too keenly the need for skilled nursing. There could be no reason for opposition, for as long as the certificates are granted by the "Medical Council," any nurse abusing her position *as a nurse* would naturally have scant mercy from the Council, who have the control of the Register, and so would be far less likely to interfere with any doctor's practice than an unregistered nurse would be.

After the Act was passed, a year of grace was given, during which all nurses holding hospital certificates could register.

Sister Henrietta, who has, perhaps, done more than anyone in South Africa to improve the nursing in the Colony, and the status of nurses, has always taken the keenest interest in Registration, and, by her enthusiasm then, and since, has induced a great many nurses to register.

I well remember a large gathering of nurses held in the Convalescent Room of the Kimberley Hospital, at which Sister Henrietta, Dr. Callender, then the house surgeon, and Mr. Williams, the magistrate, were present, when health, character, identity, and hospital certificates, were all signed and sworn to. How excited we all felt, and, I am afraid, exalted, rather, that *our* Colony had been the first to make this stride. A great many of our nurses were there, also several who were working in the town, holding certificates from other hospitals. Sister Henrietta took much trouble in looking up outsiders and explaining the benefit of the Act to them.

When this year of grace was over, the Medical Council formed a Syllabus of Subjects in which nurses must be trained, which is much the same as in the best hospitals in England. They also suggested books to be studied by nurses, though the answers to the examination questions will, by no means, be sure to be found in these books.

They have also appointed the following centres at which examinations shall be held: Cape Town, Kimberley, Port Elizabeth, Grahamstown, and King William's Town.

The house surgeons generally, and, in Kimberley, some of the visiting surgeons, give courses of lectures on Antiseptics, Anatomy, Physiology, etc. Examinations are held half-yearly, in June and December.

At first, any nurse could apply for examination who had had two years' training in a hospital of not less than forty beds; but now, I am glad to say, the Council will not examine any who have not had three years' hospital training.

The written questions are uniform for each centre, and are entrusted to two medical men, who sit as local commissioners during the time in which the answers are being written, and by

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