

The American Nursing World.**STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSES.**

How refreshing is the manner in which the American medical press discusses nursing politics—in this it is far ahead of the medical organs in this country, the editors of which appear to imagine that to boycott a question is to snuff it out. When moreover the question is of vital importance to the public health, this ostrich-like attitude can be carried too far. The failure of sympathetic co-operation upon the part of the medical press on the midwife question, compelled laymen to initiate legislation, and their organs to support a system of Registration bitterly repugnant to the large majority of the medical profession. It is to be hoped that the medical press will not adopt the non possumus attitude on the question of State Registration for Nurses. It is decidedly harmful to any profession to find itself in constant opposition to progressive movements, and thus to give the public the impression, however erroneous, that self interest comes before the public weal.

We welcome the more warmly, therefore, the liberal-minded expression of opinion on State Control of Trained Nurses to be found in the *Philadelphia Medical Journal*, of March 15th, and we quote the article in full:—

"Trained nursing is a profession, not a trade, because it involves the intelligent application of certain general principles rather than mere manual dexterity acquired by constant repetition. This will sound trite, and yet it is a necessary introduction to what we wish to say on the subject; and that is, that trained nursing is now passing through a crisis such as affects all professions at some time, whatsoever they may be. The crisis is that for purposes of profit or from motives of economy various persons and institutions are taking advantage of the desire of women to enter by easy routes a hitherto honourable calling, and thus causing a double injury; first, in providing a considerable number of unqualified persons with diplomas as trained nurses, and, second, in so increasing the supply of nurses that the profession—just as has happened to the medical profession—is becoming cheapened in the eyes of the public. One of the subsidiary results of this is that many women are applying for instruction in trained nursing whose natural qualifications are inadequate to the task; and already the cry is heard from various training-schools that a better quality of women for nurses is needed; that it is difficult to obtain enough for the needs of the hospitals from the candidates who apply for admission to the schools. Whether demo-

cracy has been a failure or not is a question that may be difficult to answer. Whether under a minimum of government small communities may obtain their highest intellectual and moral development is still an unsolved problem. It is certain, however, that in large communities much government is required, for the unscrupulous are ever willing to sacrifice the good of the community—often even their own good—for some temporary supposed advantage, or even for the pleasure of holding back a rival.

"We have found it necessary to establish a State Medical Board, which, imperfect as it is, has nevertheless subserved a most useful purpose. We have found it necessary to prescribe a minimum term of medical instruction, because men who could perhaps in a short time acquire enough information to pass the examination of the State Board would not be sufficiently familiar with disease, as such, to render them qualified to practice medicine, and this also has proved good. The question now arises whether, in view of the methods by which many so-called trained nurses are educated and let loose upon an unguarded public, the State should not intervene, and at least limit an abuse which is dangerous to the sick, and an injustice to women who have conscientiously prepared themselves for their chosen calling. We do not attempt to criticise a certain so-called college of nurses which is permitted to ply its trade in a building whose character, we should suppose, would render it unavailable for such a class of tenants: where, in a few weeks, a woman is given her diploma as a trained nurse without any practical, and with the most paltry theoretical, preparation. This is an abuse so glaring that it can almost be allowed to right itself. It is not exactly the same with small special hospitals, which from motives of economy have organised training-schools—hospitals, for example, devoted exclusively to obstetrics, exclusively to children's diseases, exclusively, even, to surgery. In none of these can a woman be supposed to acquire that well-rounded training, that familiarity with the needs of the sick-room, which can be attained only in the large general hospital. Moreover, by establishing training-schools under the leadership of one or two trained nurses, positions which might be filled by graduates of other hospitals are filled by student nurses, thus contributing to the overcrowding which is now so obvious. Moreover, the number of positions for student nurses is becoming so great that in order to obtain an adequate supply various hospitals are compelled—even the best of them—to accept women who on account of physical or other defects would otherwise have been rejected. We believe, therefore, that at the present day the most satisfactory solution of this

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