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Editorial.

ORGANISATION, EDUCATION, AND LEGISLATION.

Nothing is more noticeable or encouraging in intercourse with nurses at the present day than their increasing recognition of the need for professional organisation, improved education, and legislation, three things which are so interdependent that progress in any one of them means the advancement of all three. This Journal has for the last ten years consistently supported, and worked to promote, reform along these lines, and we welcome this feeling as a most hopeful sign of the times.

ORGANISATION.

In the organisation of all professions the important principle to be observed is the professional enfranchisement of the members. Experience has taught us that this principle can best become an integral part of our own professional organisation by the formation of the graduate nurses of each school into a League, in which every member has a vote, and therefore a voice in all professional matters which come under its consideration.

Slowly but surely these Leagues are being formed, and, in future, we may hope to find them associated together, as they are in the United States, for the general good.

EDUCATION.

On educational questions there has been a marked awakening of interest in the nursing profession during the last decade, attributable, we believe, in a great measure to the consistent advocacy of the educational interests of nurses by the Matrons' Council, and in the columns of this journal.

Evidence of the consideration at present being given to this question is afforded by two important letters which are referred to this week in our columns—one from the British Gynæcological Society, and the other from the Council of Bedford College, in reply to a letter addressed to that body by the President of the Matrons' Council on its behalf.

From these it will be seen that both the medical and nursing professions are becoming more and more alive to the necessity for some educational standard in the various branches, so as to give the trained nurse the opportunity of making herself most efficient in the different branches of her profession. Thus the Fellows of the British Gynæcological Society, have proved the desirability of some guarantee of the qualifications of nurses who undertake obstetric and gynæcological nursing, while, for some time, Superintendents of Training-Schools have felt the need of some additional special training, after certification, for pupils who show evidence of administrative and executive ability, to qualify them for the higher posts in their profession, if the best results are to be obtained, and they are to take up such posts qualified for the work they will have to perform, instead of learning it by experience gained after their appointment.

LEGISLATION.

While we eagerly welcome all evidence of a desire to further nursing education along special lines, the existence of this desire proves the necessity for the establishment of a general standard; in short, that for effective organisation and education we must have legislation. Only by legislation can the accredited members of the profession be recognised by authority, and only by the same means can an educational authority be called into existence which will have power to define the minimum standard of education which will qualify a woman to rank as a trained nurse, and which, from an independent standpoint, can place the educational needs of nurses before the heads of training-schools of both general and special hospitals and emphasise the need of co-operation between the various schools.

One of the first effects of the State recognition of trained nurses would be the formation of a General Nursing Council, representative of the various interests involved, which would define the knowledge required of a woman who aspires to the title of trained nurse.

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