

for the highest qualification she can attain has no legal force, and she is thus an easy target for the shafts of every malicious and unscrupulous person who chooses to accuse her of neglect of duty and of injurious action in the performance of her work. She is, in short, in the position of a quack. Thus, while the law affords protection to qualified practitioners in the discharge of their duty, it extends none to her.

#### THE NEED OF LEGAL STATUS.

The immediate result of the realisation of this defenceless position should be a determined demand on the part of trained nurses that the State should forthwith pass a Bill conferring upon them a defined legal status, affording the accredited members of the nursing profession the same professional status and protection in relation to nursing duties as it at present affords to medical practitioners in the practice of their profession. Unless this justice is extended to nurses, there is little doubt that the care of the sick in private families will be avoided by well-trained nurses, and thus the public will suffer. Incidentally, the medical profession will suffer also, for it is only when a skilled and trustworthy nurse can be left in charge of a serious case that the medical practitioner can have any confidence that all his scientific care may not be rendered unavailing in his absence by unskilled and ignorant nursing.

#### THE DANGER TO THE PUBLIC.

So much for the nurse and the medical attendant. What of the public? That the public have a grievance is undeniable, for how, at present, are they to discriminate between the skilled and the unskilled woman, since they have no standard with which to compare her qualifications? Whichever way, therefore, we regard the issues involved in the case under consideration, it forms the very strongest argument which can be advanced for the Registration of Trained Nurses by the State, thus minimising the dangers to which the public are at present exposed by the innocent employment of incompetent persons as nurses.

#### SELF-PROTECTION.

The lesson of the foregoing and other cases to private nurses is, unquestionably, the need of co-operating in self-defence. Medical practitioners have found it necessary to organise Medical Defence Unions, the value of which to them is indisputable. If nurses are to defend themselves successfully against legal proceedings, they must take the same course.

### Annotations.

#### THE QUEEN AND ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL.

Her Majesty the Queen has very graciously shown further evidence of her warm interest in the welfare and future of St. Bartholomew's Hospital by consenting to become the first Lady Governor of that institution.

#### EYE-TESTING AND THE LONDON SCHOOL BOARD.

The question of eye-testing is a serious one with the School Board children of to-day; and almost as serious a question in the London hospitals. At the London Hospital, for instance, shoals of little ones are sent by their parents almost daily to have their eyes "tested for the School Board," quite a different matter from having their eyes "seen to" for any actual or fancied disease. The School Board does not directly send children to the hospital, but on the cards given to "cases with defective vision" the parents are advised to procure medical advice. When it is realised that twenty minutes to half an hour is required to test efficiently each child's eyes, it becomes impossible for out-patient ophthalmic surgeons to get through the work, with short-sightedness so greatly on the increase. We are of opinion that London's educational authority should provide medical officers to test and treat the children's sight, as our hospitals are fully occupied in treating the eye diseases of the poor who flock to them for relief. We entirely sympathise with the Chairman of the London Hospital in objecting to have the whole organisation of the out-patient department of the hospital upset by crowds of Board School children, to whom it is impossible to give adequate attention.

#### THE VACATION SCHOOL.

At a recent meeting of the London School Board a report on the vacation school held for the past two years at the Passmore Edwards Settlement during the summer holidays was submitted. From it we gather that another bright idea has been borrowed from America, which has happily taken root in this country under the fostering care of Mrs. Humphry Ward. The average attendance of the children was 601.9, the number on the roll being 751, and there were 1,681 applications for the 750 places. The school was worked on the mixed principle, and the curriculum consisted first of all of prayers, followed by manual training for the boys, housewifery and cooking for the girls,

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