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## The Nurses' Bill before the House.

At last those nurses who for so many years have been working for the organisation of their profession see some definite result of their labours. On Monday, the 15th inst., the "Bill to regulate the qualifications of Trained Nurses, and to provide for their Registration," promoted by the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, was introduced into the House of Commons by Dr. R. Farquharson, Member for West Aberdeenshire, and read for the first time. The thanks of all trained nurses are due to Dr. Farquharson, and those gentlemen who are supporting him, for bringing in the Bill, the effect of which will be of far-reaching consequence not only to nurses, but to the public who depend upon them for efficient care in sickness.

When the Bill becomes law, the minimum standard of education qualifying for recognition as a trained nurse will for the first time be defined and enforced, and the public will be able to discriminate between those who have and have not attained this standard. How essential this is, only those who know how important a factor good nursing is in the recovery of a patient can estimate.

Therefore Dr. Farquharson, and the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses which is promoting the Bill, have done a public service, the full value of which will be estimated only by future generations. It now remains for all supporters of the movement to put their shoulders to the wheel and to work hard until the Bill becomes law.

Every member of the Society can help to form public opinion on this subject—and it is public opinion which carries a Bill through—by showing the public that the efficiency of nurses is a matter of vital concern to all, and by inducing nurses who are not yet members of the Society formed to obtain Registration to join it without delay, so that Parliament may be impressed by the fact that nurses are really in earnest.

## Annotations.

### THE NEED OF PROFESSIONAL STATUS.

We hear on all sides, both from Matrons of hospitals and from members of the public, that the need of a common bond which shall weld nurses together into a professional body is daily becoming more urgent, if nursing is to maintain the high position to which it attained in the latter half of the last century. The reason is not far to seek. Nursing no longer ranks as an occupation which is the exclusive prerogative of the religious and philanthropic, but is rapidly becoming one of the foremost professions for women. In their time the religious communities have done much for the sick. In the middle ages, religious sisterhoods supplied many devoted women who lavished refined, if not very skilled, care upon the sick and afflicted, who were inspired by the highest motives, and bound together in the bonds of discipline by a common rule of life.

With the dissolution of the religious houses in the reign of Henry VIII. the sick fell upon evil times; they were deprived of even this modicum of help, and the occupation of nursing steadily declined in prestige, until, within the memory of even the present generation, it was regarded as suitable employment for women of the most ignorant type, who were too often, in addition, vicious and depraved.

But happily a sense of their responsibility was aroused in the philanthropic and earnest-minded women of the last generation. To them it appeared intolerable that the sick in their extremity should be at the mercy of ignorant and callous attendants, and cultured women in considerable numbers were found willing to enter our hospitals and workhouse infirmaries, and endure the hardships which were then part of the life, in order that the want of adequate care for the sick might be no longer a national reproach. The movement was essentially one of earnest-minded lay women, although the religious communities, which once more were beginning to take root in the Anglican

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