

obtruded itself in the way of age, environment, occupation, a nervous instability, and actual disease. Probably, the younger the cells infused with alcohol the greater the harm impressed upon them. Hence the growing tissues of children were quickly deteriorated. He considered it probable that many instances of rickets occurring in children who were breast-fed were due to insufficient and abnormal mother's milk charged with small but repeated doses of alcohol. In old age, alcohol was a potent factor in rapidly wearing out the human machine. The environment had a great influence upon the effects of alcohol in causing deterioration. The close connection between a craving for drink and bad housing, bad feeding, a polluted and depressing atmosphere, long hours of work in over-heated and often ill-ventilated rooms, only relieved by the excitements of town life, was only too self-evident, and the ravages of alcohol under such circumstances only too perceptible on all hands. It was just in these very factors of deterioration that a vicious circle was apt to be set up. Bad housing and bad feeding created a desire for alcohol, and the money spent on the drug left less for rent and proper comestibles. The meagre knowledge of cookery possessed by young women brought up in towns led to much inducement for both their husbands and themselves to frequent the public house for the purpose of obtaining alcohol to give them the sense of having secured a good meal. Want of fresh air deprived the drinker of the oxygen needed for the destruction of alcohol. Fatigue and excitement both engendered a thirst for alcohol, and through it deterioration. In connection with occupation it appeared that the higher and more intricate the character of the work undertaken by a man, the more rapid were the deteriorating effects of alcohol upon him. The drudgery of many female lives made women have recourse to alcohol. The fact of deterioration by alcohol was abundantly proved by the statistics of those life assurance offices which separated the "lives" of moderate drinkers from those of total abstainers, the greater longevity of the latter being distinctly marked. The indirect action of alcohol in the production of deterioration was even more pronounced than the direct, and was particularly so upon child-life. Both before and after the birth of the infant, alcohol in the mother told upon it. Whatever view might be held with regard to heredity, there could be but little dispute that the alcoholic mother neglected her offspring, and that the effects of such neglect were disastrous. If the mother as well as the father were given to alcohol, the progeny would deteriorate in every way, and the future of the race would be imperilled. The facts deduced to show that alcohol caused deterioration were worthy of close consideration with a view to the eradication of a force tending to undermine the efficiency of a nation,

Progress of State Registration.

There is no doubt that there is a very strong feeling amongst many Matrons of country hospitals and nursing institutions that Registration of Trained Nurses is absolutely necessary, if the evils which are rife in our ranks are to be effectually dealt with. We are in communication with Matrons and nurses all over the country, and the following are specimens of letters which we have received on the question :—

ONCE CERTIFICATED ALWAYS CERTIFICATED.

DEAR MADAM,—May I mention one of the reasons why I am anxious that State Registration of Nurses should come into force—a reason which, in my opinion, is more important than the fixing of a definite standard of training? At present, a nurse who has lost all claim to the title of trained nurse may still produce her certificate of training and her testimonials and obtain posts for which not only by her past conduct she is totally unfitted, but she brings disgrace upon all the nurses of the staff she is working on, and becomes a danger to the public. There seems to be no means of checking her or of having her certificate cancelled. I have just recently been a victim of such circumstances, a lady coming to me as a private nurse holding a three years' certificate of training, excellent testimonials, and to all appearances being a worthy member of the profession. She was sent in from the first case she nursed for me for drunkenness, and since her dismissal from my staff she has been sent away from a private nursing home in the town, which she joined on leaving me—[presumably taken on without a reference to the writer.—Ed.]—for the same reasons. She is at present undergoing imprisonment for stealing, drunkenness, and getting money on false pretences. Surely, if nurses were properly registered and a record kept of their conduct, such scandals would not occur, and the frequent complaints one hears of nurses would become a thing of the past."

THE FAILURES FLOURISH.

DEAR MADAM,—I believe, not alone that State Registration would be beneficial to our profession, but that it is becoming absolutely necessary. Under existing circumstances it is possible for girls who have failed in their training—by disgracing their sex—to pass as nurses because they wear uniform. In my certain knowledge this has happened with girls whom I have dismissed summarily at the end of a few months, but who are now drawing good salaries as private nurses, and pose as having been trained here. [It will be remembered that the baby farming murderess, Walters, who was hanged for aiding and abetting the murderess, Sach, in 1903, stated she was trained at St. Thomas's, but no record of the woman's work there was procurable.—Ed.] Any measure which would protect us from such scandal, and the public from incurring the risk of being nursed by such women, must be an advantage to society generally. I cannot understand the ground on which so many of the larger hospitals and their Matrons oppose the measure, but sincerely trust the efforts to raise the status of the nursing profession may meet with the success it deserves."

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