

afford the public protection from her, and to maintain standards of professional efficiency and moral conduct.

#### THE SUBJUGATION OF THE NURSE.

The suggestions which Miss Monk makes in place of the registration of nurses are:—

1. That the public and the medical profession should ask "each nurse to produce her certificate of training, and if that is not forthcoming at once, to expose the association that supplied her, for providing an untrained nurse when a trained one was expected."

This suggestion appears to us absolutely impracticable, and there is the fundamental difficulty that there is no standard at present for a trained nurse, and an imposing certificate may be produced by a woman who has had only three months' training in a special hospital.

2. That "it is not the registration of the individual nurse which is desirable, but the registration of the institutions, homes, and agencies from which she is supplied." This at once touches the liberty of the subject. By all means let institutions be registered, but this could in no way affect the legal status of the trained nurse, and would not touch the basis of the whole question—that is, the definition and maintenance of a professional curriculum. Such a system would reduce the nurse to a mere chattel.

3. "The adoption of a uniform certificate by all hospitals large and small." This is impossible, for unless the hospitals can give a uniform training they cannot bestow a uniform certificate. It is because this is impossible that we claim that a Central Nursing Authority alone can deal with the various interests involved, define an efficient system of training, test the results in an impartial examination, and certificate and register the successful candidates.

Miss Monk proceeds:—

"It surely behoves all who have the interests of nurses and nursing work at heart, and who are striving so earnestly for their improvement, to endeavour to come to some unanimous decision that would once and for all place them in their true position, and guard them from all future misconception and disrepute—a decision which would restore the nurse and her work in the eyes of the world to the noble position they held. . . . There is no sacrifice which could be too great to bring back this happy state of affairs, and to reinstate them once more in the eyes of the world, their patients, and their friends."

But this plea constitutes an admission that the conditions under which nurses work are demoralising, or they would not need reinstating, and the disrepute which has fallen upon them is caused mainly by women who, under an efficient system of registration, would be proved not to belong to the ranks of trained nurses at all.

A cardinal mistake made by the authorities of training-schools in relation to the Registration of

nurses is that they assume, in the most extraordinary way, that all who claim to be nurses pass through such a school, and that, therefore, reference has only to be made to it. As a matter of fact, multitudes of so-called nurses pass through no training-school whatever, but are turned out by hundreds from small private nursing homes, special hospitals, district nursing associations, &c., after a few months' experience.

The training-school authorities are also in error in attempting to retain absolute control over their certificated pupils. Their main function in this relation is the education of the probationer, and their domination ceases when she goes forth into the world as a certificated nurse, and they no longer either employ or pay her. The organisation and control of certificated nurses can never be a matter for the training-schools alone. It is the fundamental principle that the skilled worker has a right, under the *regis* of the State, to self-government.

### Nursing as a Profession.

Mr. Sydney Holland had an interesting article in last month's *The World and his Wife* about nursing at the London Hospital. We note with satisfaction that he calls it "Nursing as a Profession: A Practical Description of the Course of Training Undergone by all Professional Nurses," because, in his evidence before the Select Committee on Nursing, he objected to nursing being called a "profession," and fell foul of the registrationists for insisting that it should be organised into one.

To quote the Blue Book, Mr. Holland said: "I know what I am going to say now will be very much misinterpreted, and I shall be held up as having said something very inimical to all nurses, but, as a matter of fact, I firmly believe that if registration were to pass it would lead nurses to consider themselves as belonging to what is called a 'profession.'"

Surely after this statement it is exceedingly inconsistent for Mr. Holland to open his article with the following sentence, as we consider it apt to give a wrong impression of the present status of nurses to the confiding parents who apply to him for advice:—

"Every year I receive a number of letters asking me what I think of nursing as a profession for 'my dear daughter,' who is described as being 'everything that is perfect,' so I gladly accept the invitation to write a short article on nursing as a profession, which, in future, I shall be able to send to these anxious parents."

At present nurses have no professional status, and Mr. Holland should have made this unsatisfactory condition quite plain in his article.

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