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Editorial.

A QUESTION IN PARLIAMENT.

Considering the gravity of the "nurse-thief" scandal, to which the *Daily Mail* has given such wide publicity, and the helpless position of the public in reference thereto, it is not surprising that Mr. Hart-Davies, M.P., last week asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in the House of Commons, whether he would consider the advisability of establishing a Government system of certificates and registration of nurses.

What is surprising is that Mr. Secretary Gladstone replied that this matter had been under consideration for some time, but serious objections and difficulties stood in the way of the establishment of any such system as was proposed. He was not prepared to take any action in the matter.

The truth is that the Registration of Nurses question is a woman's labour question, and sooner or later will have to be fought out on economic lines. At present as probationers, and even as certificated nurses, we are absolutely at the mercy of the employer, and health, work, and earnings can be, and have been, used up like water under that cloak of charity which has been responsible for covering cruel injustice towards working women in every land.

What reform (especially where human labour is concerned) is ever free from serious objections in the politician's opinion? Where right and justice are to be done, of course there are difficulties to be overcome, and we nurses are not worth a row of pins if we do not overcome them, as much for the sake of the sick as in support of our own self-respect.

In millions of issues of the *Daily Mail* it has been stated on good evidence that women acting as nurses can be proved to

be leading criminal and immoral lives. This fact should make every trained nurse who is worth her salt tingle with determination that she shall not be classed with them, and that such a scandal shall cease. As soon as the holidays are over we must take such public action as shall compel Parliament to do justice to a most honourable body of women whose good work for the community has been described as a "national asset."

A NATIONAL ASSET.

The terrible wastage of infant life to which our male-managed municipalities have, until quite recently, paid no heed, has at last become a national question. Fewer poor babies, fewer workers, less trade, less wealth. When it becomes a matter of money it is high time something was done.

Poor mothers are to blame because they are ignorant. Rather poor mothers are *not* to blame because they are ignorant. Men have defined their education, thus they are ignorant of the simplest facts of physiology, and the elementary laws of health.

And suddenly it is realised as an economic fact that on this righteous knowledge the whole edifice of our national greatness is founded. The irony of fate, indeed, that the health, wealth, and happiness of my lady's lambkin, all depend upon how some poor little slum mite is bred and born! Whether he has wholesome nourishment from his mammy's bosom or "gets convulsions" from his poisoned bottle. Oh! the eternal feminine—and her subtle revenges.

Immutable is Mother Law. Deny sweet and cleanly motherhood to the "weakest of these," and all must pay the price.

"Come quickly," cries Ignorance to Knowledge, "I'm coming," answers the Registered Nurse.

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