

## Morality in Relation to Health.      Progress of State Registration.

The Hon. Albinia Brodrick, who is Chairman of the Section of Morality in Relation to Health of the National Council of Nurses, is forming a Committee, and the following ladies have already accepted her invitation to work on it:—Mrs. Gotto, Hon. Secretary to the Eugenics Education Society; Mrs. Wethered, Dr. H. Wilson, Miss Amy Hughes, Miss Curtis, Miss H. L. Pearse, Miss M. Burr, Miss Hulme, and Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, *ex-officio*. The date of the annual meeting of the National Council of Nurses has not yet been arranged, but Miss Brodrick will then present a report on the important work, with which her Committee will deal.

Under the auspices of the California Public Health Association a Society has been organised which is notable for the frankness of its name, and for the fact that a woman, Dr. Frances M. Greene, has been chosen as its president by the men who greatly preponderate in its membership. The organisers regarded the term "social hygiene" as too elastic, and the word "prophylaxis" as too technical and obscure for the layman, and decided to begin their campaign of education by using a perfectly definite title. The Society is therefore called the California Association for the Study and Prevention of Syphilis and Gonorrhoea; and it proposes to treat these diseases frankly as infectious, to habituate the public to hear and speak of them without embarrassment, and thus to drag them into the light where all men may know and avoid them. This is a thoroughly sensible decision.

Messrs. G. P. Putnams Sons, 24, Bedford Street, Strand, W.C., will shortly publish Miss Lavinia L. Dock's book, "Hygiene and Morality." The book is intended primarily for nurses, and anything from her pen is assured of careful study by them. Miss Dock points out the alarming prevalence of the venereal diseases, the later ramifications for which they are often responsible, and the attempts made to restrict their activity and their virulence. She writes on behalf of the numberless innocent victims—both women and children, and shows that the attempts to control prostitution have been partial in their nature, and ill-guided, because they have unwarrantably been confined to only one of the infected sexes.

Miss Dock exposes the fallacy that prostitution is a necessary evil, and insists that it is a disgrace to civilisation, and should not be tolerated.

"Nurses' Registration. Oh! bother," exclaimed a worried M.P. to whom I was speaking on the matter last week. "My dear lady, surely the Lords and the Budget are enough to distract a Member of Parliament in these times without considering the eternal feminine."

"It is just there you are wrong," I reply. "This question of Nurses' Registration is not primarily a woman's question. It is quite national in scope—indeed, international. You can't get away from it. Men must be born as well as women. Baby boys are helpless scraps of humanity, and must be cared for. The little rascals in youth suffer sickness and injury. As they grow older they take bigger risks to health than girls. As men they are not exempt from sickness, and sooner or later you are going to die—so don't forget it. Thus you require skilled nursing from birth to death, and if a high standard of National Health is to be maintained you have got to have your nurses trained, tested, supervised, encouraged, and guaranteed, just as you have by Act of Parliament protected yourself against quack doctors and chemists. And even if there is a bit of woman question about it, are we not constantly informed that our interests are safe in the hands of a male Legislature? I suppose you don't want that assertion to be taken with a grain of salt."

"Ah! I never realised all that."

"I only ask you to realise," I plead, "that the battle is to the strong. Through ignorance thousands of our poor people are feeble, maimed, halt, and blind. The well-instructed, well-trained nurse is the greatest factor in social reform you have got. Give her knowledge, give her scope, give her status. Don't pooh-poo her wonderful work in the contemptuous manner in which women's efforts have hitherto been kept cheap. The weak in nature for ever appeals to the eternal mother. The best nurses are mothering all the time, and they only ask that their training and education shall qualify them to mother intelligently."

"Why this registration question is not only of national scope, it touches the very springs of humanity," our M.P. excitedly exclaims.

"If only I were in the House and could plead our own cause, this Bill would have been law a decade ago," I murmur with a sigh.

"Ah! now we revert to the eternal feminine," he says, smiling.

"Eliminate her—do—and have a lovely dull time," I say tartly, "but in the meantime please influence the Government to attend to

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)