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EDITORIAL.

THE DESECRATION OF THE UNIFORM OF THE TRAINED NURSE.

It is always interesting to trace to their source the origin of national customs, and the uniform of the trained nurse is unquestionably her heritage from the religious sisters who made the nursing of the sick their special care; and the veil to which so many trained nurses have clung so tenaciously, is really a useless, unpractical appendage to a uniform bonnet, which originated in the conventual veil still worn out of doors by members of religious communities.

A uniform is always a sign of honourable service, and an inspiration to loyalty, discipline and *esprit de corps*. It is impossible to conceive of an efficient Navy or Army without the respective uniforms which are such a source of legitimate pride to their wearers, or to imagine that these Services could have attained the prestige and cohesion they now enjoy, if they had had no outward and visible sign of unity. Pride of cloth is a most effective element in maintaining self-respect, and even the most unworthy members of the national Services will respect the King's uniform, and hesitate to do anything to bring it into contempt.

And as the uniforms of the Navy and Army indicate that the wearers are servants of the King, so the uniform of the trained nurse indicates her consecration to the service of the sick, for this reason it should always be worn with a certain gravity and restraint, and with jealousy for its honour, for nursing is a serious and responsible work, not to be undertaken lightly. Cloak and bonnet must be professional, in appearance becoming, and well brushed; white

bonnet strings and collar, if worn, fresh and spotless. A quarter of a century ago the uniform of a nurse was an outward and visible sign associated in the minds of the public with an inward and spiritual grace, and a nurse in uniform might venture into haunts of evil repute, where no policeman would go alone, serenely confident of the respect of the most dangerous criminals for the wearer, whose errand they well knew to be one of mercy to suffering humanity.

The lack of respect shown to nurses' uniform at the present day is not evidence of lack of respect to trained nurses, but indicates that the prestige of uniform, as worn by them has resulted in its use by thieves, prostitutes, abortionists, procuresses, and other criminal and immoral persons, as a disguise in which they can prosecute their nefarious designs without suspicion.

Is the honoured uniform of the trained nurse to be permanently allowed to pass to unholy uses? It is for the public, as represented by Parliament, to determine. For the last quarter of a century nurses have been asking for their legal registration by the State, with self-governing powers which would enable them to maintain discipline in the ranks of their profession, and to protect the honour and good name of registered nurses. When a Nurses' Registration Act becomes law, it will not be past the wit of women to devise some means of restricting the use of a uniform to registered nurses, and to bonâ-fide pupils in training. The professional organization of trained nurses has been too long delayed. Now the scandals resulting from disorganization are so gross that it is imperative that Parliament should forthwith deal with the question.

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