

absorb in four or six months, but, even if she acquires it, Heaven help the patients suffering with the critical illnesses enumerated above entrusted to her tender mercies.

But, we read, "an important feature in associations of this description, whether employing Holt-Ockley or district nurses, is the 'committee lady.' Nurses are not left unaided, and without supervision, but, in each village covered by the association there is a committee lady whose duties are . . . to visit the cottage where the nurse is employed during her residence there, in order to ascertain that the nurse is doing her duty and is properly treated, and also, in some cases, to give any extra assistance which may be required." Truly a case of the blind leading the blind. What right has anyone who has never had a day's training to supervise the work of nurses, or to define what are adequate standards? Until they have passed through a three years' term of training the philanthropic members of committees providing nursing for the poor have no more right to define what is the curriculum for a trained nurse than they have to define the qualifications for the members of the profession of medicine, with which nursing is interdependent.

There is no doubt that a class of handy women, with a knowledge of elementary nursing duties may be useful in the homes of the poor, but the mischief is that, not content with supplying the worker, philanthropic committees insist upon investing her with the name and responsibilities of members of a profession which her knowledge does not qualify her to assume.

At the same time they jealously object to highly skilled professional women, who have spent years in acquiring their professional knowledge, having any recognition whatever, or any voice in the control of their own affairs.

When a Nurses Registration Bill becomes law, as it must do at no distant date, if the nurses of Florence Nightingale's country are not to become the outlaws of the profession she founded, the Central Governing Body will define what is the necessary qualification for a trained nurse entrusted with the responsible care of the sick. Other classes of useful workers will then fall into place. But trained nurses will not tolerate the suggestion made by Lady Jersey, which has already been considered and rejected by the House of Lords, that there shall be "some kind of register or directory" to "include the names of all respectable nurses holding certificates, with the place and length of training, and the class of certificate held." We must have one portal to the nursing profession, and those who care for the sick will then take rank either as skilled professional workers, inside, or as useful but unstandardised workers outside.

THE QUESTION OF NURSING HOMES.

The real evil, Lady Jersey considers, is not the employment of nurses with comparatively short training, so long as the extent of their training is known, but "the evil for which a remedy is sorely

needed is the multiplication of so-called Nursing Homes, some of which are merely houses of ill fame in disguise, while others make high charges, and are altogether inefficient, both in nursing and in household arrangements. The provisions of the present Bill would not touch the former and would affect the latter very slightly if at all. The utmost which could result would be that the head of one of these inferior homes would gain an additional chance of misleading the public if she could advertise herself as a registered nurse. She might have just scraped through her three years' training and subsequent examination, while otherwise quite unqualified to conduct such an establishment, and under the guise of probationers she could staff it with any failures whom she could run on the cheap."

While no direct reference is made to nursing homes in the Nurses Registration Bill, it is certain that they will be profoundly affected by it.

In the first place if it ever happened that a house of ill fame were run by a registered nurse, she could forthwith be removed from the register; but we do not believe that even in the present state of disorganisation, it is possible to point to one house of this kind managed by a thoroughly qualified nurse, and when a nurse's name is on a public register, removal from which would mean professional ruin, such a contingency is inconceivable.

As for the superintendent of an inferior home misleading the public if she could advertise herself as a registered nurse, at present it is not necessary to have any training at all before assuming the control of a home, let alone three years, and if once nurses are registered the possibility of running such a home, with failures, on the cheap will be very remote, because the public will be sufficiently alert if they are paying for skilled nursing to see that they get it, once they know what is the accepted standard. They may be cheated now, because there is none.

In this connection it is significant that while a trained nurse "who has only just scraped through her three years' training and subsequent examination" is insufficiently trained, in Lady Jersey's opinion, to nurse the well-to-do in nursing homes, she considers a far lower standard quite adequate for the sick poor, even when suffering with some of the most acute forms of illness known to medical science.

The health of the poor is their greatest asset, and we claim that it is the duty of the State to conserve it. It is deplorable that social influence should be permitted to affect mischievously a matter of such vital importance to the people.

A MEDAL FOR MISS BRAZIER.

Miss Brazier, who accompanied the Duchess of Connaught to Canada as nurse, has now that her skilled services are no longer required, been presented by the Duke of Connaught with a medal of the Royal Victorian Order, sent for her by the King. Miss Brazier was trained at the London Hospital.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)