

due performance of them, and to the relation in which she stands to the patient and to the medical attendant, regard being had also to the educational standard and sound position of the vast majority of Nurses, the calling of a Nurse involves very different considerations from those which apply to members of the medical or any other skilled profession. The moral characteristics, including the disposition and natural gifts, of the Nurse form most essential elements in her qualifications, and these, as distinguished from technical knowledge, could find no sufficient place on a general Register, which would afford no trustworthy means of ascertaining them. The effect of such a Register, therefore, by supplying a certificate of competency, professing to be authoritative, but which from the nature of the case must necessarily be imperfect and untrustworthy, would be to mislead the public and the medical profession, and also to lower the standard of Nursing and the estimation in which competent Nurses are held.

(2) The authorities of the Nurse Training Schools are alone in a position from their experience and special knowledge to understand the needs and provide for the Nursing requirements of the sick, of the medical profession, and the various institutions which employ Nurses.

(3) They alone possess that knowledge of the capabilities, disposition, and character of each individual Nurse, without which it is impossible to form a judgment of any value as to her efficiency, competency, and conscientiousness.

(4) The object of the proposed scheme of Registration is, in fact, more efficiently attained by the practice of the existing Training Schools in issuing Certificates, and maintaining their own Registers of Trained Nurses, and furnishing other information (often confidential) as to the Nurse's character; and a better guarantee is thus afforded to all who employ Nurses, as well as a better protection to the Nurses themselves.

(5) Although a "Register of Certificated Midwives" does not fall within the immediate purviews of the Nurse Training Schools, it may be pointed out that the work of a Midwife has little in common with that of a Nurse, and that the proper regulation and training of the former are vital to the well-being of the majority of the mothers of this country, the issue at stake frequently involving matters of life and death.

In these circumstances the General Medical Council, the Parliamentary Bills Committee of the British Medical Association, the Midwives'

Institute, the Royal Obstetrical Society, and other professional bodies, have taken up the question of Midwives, with a view to securing early legislation on the subject.

Any limited and private Register of Certificated Midwives, such as that proposed, is not only superfluous, but would be opposed to the best interests of the public and the profession, and so must be withstood by all who have the welfare of Midwives and their efficient and proper regulation at heart.

(6) Even among the medical and other skilled professions, no body or association having for its object the testing and certifying the educational and other qualifications of its Members has yet received a licence or other privileged position until after it had been in existence for very many years, and had shown by actual results that its action had been beneficial both to the public and to the body it purported to represent, and that it had the support of the leading members as well as of the large majority of the rank and file of that body. The grant of a licence for such a purpose to a newly-established, and as yet untried, Association, even if the general object were a desirable one, is therefore wholly without precedent; but, for the reasons stated, the method now proposed of attempting to carry out the object is altogether unsuitable to the case of Nurses.

We are further of opinion, that whilst the Association of Nurses in a friendly society for their mutual benefit may be productive of some advantages to them, any proposal calculated to interfere with the existing Nurse Training Schools, in regard to the education, training and certification of Nurses as at present conducted, cannot but prove inimical to the improvement of the standard of Nursing, and consequently confusing to Medical Practitioners, and detrimental to the welfare of Nurses and of those who may be committed to their charge.

Signatures.	Office.	Hospital and Training School to which Attached.

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