

of trained nurses from year to year. It was formed of people who were members before that period, no less than 1,623. It is really, my lords, not a little significant that out of 1,777 upon the register in 1892, no less than 1,623 joined during that period of absence of any qualification. And I may have to note that there has not been a corresponding increase since, for reasons which possibly your lordships may be able to appreciate when the matter has been a little more explained. Now, in the first place, I would ask your lordships to observe what is the qualification that they themselves suggested?—"that they had been engaged for three years in work in Hospitals or Infirmaries." There is no Hospital certificate required, it is not necessary that they should have a certificate. The qualification merely said that they must have been engaged for three years at work in Hospitals or Infirmaries. Now, if your lordships care to examine the blue books, I will show you on the evidence of the most experienced people that in many cases for private Nursing a Nurse with twelve months' experience is better than a Nurse with three years. That is to say that there are varieties of Nurses—that it is a profession in which an infinite variety of qualifications are required, and, as pointed out by the most experienced people, it by no means follows that a three years' training is either necessary or desirable in many cases. But let me point out that if that is supposed to be the minimum which the Council of this Association require, the state of things at the present time does not in any way justify the register being put out as a Chartered Register—a register which is being kept under the authority of a Royal Charter—as a register of trained Nurses, and not even of members of the Association for 1892. It would become, under the Royal sanction, a Chartered Register of Trained Nurses. Well, of the number now on the register, your lordships will doubtless be surprised to hear that no less a total than 439 could be picked out at once as having no qualification at all. Here are a very considerable number, and if your lordships desire to examine into them, I can give you the cases accurately and minutely in detail. I don't want to mention names, and I can give you specimens which can be explained in the clearest possible manner by reference to the register itself. Now in 136 cases the persons have no certificate and no evidence of competency at all.

Lord HOBHOUSE.—Kindly give us the page in the red book?

Sir R. WEBSTER.—No, 178, on page 2. By which your lordships will notice that, in that case, the qualifications are set forth to be—"Guy's Hospital, 1872-73; Wimpole Street Institution, 1873-75; North Audley Street Institution, 1875-83; London Association of Nurses, to date." There is no time mentioned at all for the only Hospital named there—namely, Guy's Hospital. Of course, it cannot be three years, and it may be only the short period of three months, and the other Institutions are simply Nursing Institutions—places which send out Nurses. The next one is No. 18, and that is stated 2 "Tottenham Hospital, 1878 and '88—" I should rather think that this is a mistake. It may be 1888 as well, but if so it is a remarkable instance I should think. Then the entry proceeds "Sunderland Infirmary, 1879." Now the Tottenham Hospital is a Deaconesses Home, and it does not confer anything like the same qualification as a General Hospital. There is no reference at all to the statement of the time during which that lady has passed through a certain Hospital. Now I mention this, not to depreciate the particular individual,

but in order to show that this which is spoken of as a register of qualifications, is a record of those having been members of the Association, and that it becomes nothing more than a copy of the roll of membership. Now we will, with your lordships permission, take No. 19.

The Marquis of RIPON.—May I ask you a question for my own information upon one point. I see it stated that in the case of those marked with a "dagger," their statements have not been verified by the return of the printed circular?

Sir R. WEBSTER.—I intend to call your lordship's attention to that. They purport to send out annually a circular, in which I am told, that they ask if the name and address of the nurse is correct, in order to keep their register up to date, and what the note means, my lord, is that they have received no answers from those marked with a dagger. No less than 312 out of the 1,777 are marked with the dagger, meaning that they are not verified up to date. I mention this because it bears upon another most important point which is really in dispute—in fact the weight of which has not been appreciated—and that is the impossibility of the keeping such a document as this by any general body and keeping it correct and keeping it accurate. Let me now refer you to case 19—the next one. The entry is "Leeds Infirmary, 1880; City Road Hospital in 1883." Now, it is obvious on the face of it that that nurse could not have been for any length of time in a general hospital. The City Road Hospital is only a small special hospital. Would your lordships now turn to 409 in the red book—"Miller Memorial Hospital, Greenwich." Well, that is simply a memorial hospital where there are only twenty-three beds. The statement is "Miller Memorial Hospital, Greenwich, 1885." That will indicate to your lordships at once what the character of this record is, if you come to deal with this register from the point of view of information. They would seem to think it possible that by a communication by circular for a trained Nurse, they can get at the minimum of qualification which, by their rules, they require of registration.

Lord HANMER: At page 8 of the red book, it is stated, "Applicants for registration must produce proof that they have been engaged for three years in work in Hospitals or Infirmaries, of which not less than 12 months must have been spent in a recognised general hospital containing, at least, 40 beds." What they waive is the latter condition as to the number of beds. The condition as to the three years is supposed not to be waived under any circumstances?

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER: Quite so, my lord. Now this is the circular to which Lord Ripon was good enough to call my attention.—"Madam.—Will you kindly correct, if erroneous, the accompanying slip for the Register, and in any case send the same by return to the Registrar. Statements not verified or corrected by the Nurse will be indicated by a sign." Of course from the point of view of ascertaining whether a nurse was a fit and proper person to be a trained nurse, it would be a ludicrous thing to suppose that upon such a slip a nurse could be expected to disclose anything that would interfere with her prospects of employment. It simply means "are your name and address still the same," because the qualifications are only those which had been previously investigated. Your Lordships must understand that, in criticising these cases, I do not suggest that my objections are exhausted, for what I am instructed is that there is a very large proportion of cases which do not come within anything like the qualification that they themselves profess to desire. Well the next case is that of a Nurse engaged in private nursing, registered as 490. Your lordships will notice that there is the entry

A WARM BATH in TEN MINUTES. The New Patent "Calda" (cost of gas, 1d.) Price from 60s. Patent "Eclipse" Oil Bath Heater. Price from £2 18s. 6d.—G. SHREWSBURY, 36, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C. Of all Gasfitters, &c.

The "NURSING RECORD" has a Larger Sale than any other Journal devoted solely to Nursing Work.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)