

lowered from twenty-five to twenty-three years, and this enables ladies not only to qualify but to occupy two years of the waiting time by earning money as lecturers."

This notice she had submitted for the consideration of the Matrons' Council a few days later, as she considered, and still thought that the preliminary education of Nurses was quite outside the province of a lay Society, and a very real danger to the efficient development of the nursing profession. Mrs. Fenwick was, however, glad to report that owing to the initiative of Miss Isla Stewart, the subject of educational lectures had again been considered by the Executive of the Royal British Nurses' Association, with the gratifying result that at the recent Council Meeting the resolution had been rescinded, and empowering the executive Committee to arrange for a further course of lectures.

Mrs. Fenwick then laid a few suggestions before the Council which she thought might develop into a useful organization for preliminary education in the future if organised under the control of the Chartered Corporation of Nurses :—

(1) A Central College of Nursing for the Metropolis should be instituted, the same scheme being carried out by local centres, at which women desirous of entering the Training Schools could receive theoretical instruction by lectures and practical demonstrations.

(2) The teachers appointed should be highly qualified medical men and thoroughly trained Nurses.

(3) The examinations should be conducted by equally competent persons other than the teachers.

Mrs. Fenwick said that there were a limited number of the larger and richer hospitals which might prefer to carry out the preliminary education of Probationers in their own nursing colleges. This was being done in connection with the London Hospital; in Dublin the Central School of Nursing had been started, but for the smaller schools and special Hospitals the expense of individual teaching could not be undertaken, and these might accept a class certificate of elementary teaching after examination from the Central College of Nursing, preparatory to placing a Probationer in the wards on a term of trial. It was very essential that the selection of each candidate should remain as heretofore, in the hands of the Matron; but systematic education and increased knowledge should prove beneficial to all concerned. She, therefore, in putting her resolution to the Meeting, hoped that the Royal British Nurses' Association would be approached with the request that they would consider the scheme.

A letter received from a Matron, asking for the advice of the Council concerning a question of discipline. This was referred to the Advisory Committee for consideration.

The meeting then adjourned.

## Matrons in Council.

THE first Conference of the Matrons' Council for this Session took place in the evening of the 24th inst. at the Medical Society's Rooms, Chandos Street, W. Upwards of sixty Matrons and Nurses were present, and Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, who took the chair, briefly introduced Miss Isla Stewart, who read the following valuable paper :—

## A UNIFORM CURRICULUM OF EDUCATION FOR NURSES.

BY MISS ISLA STEWART.

To say that the profession of Nursing needs organising is to state a self-evident fact. To realise it one has only to consider the want of uniformity in the matter and conditions of Nurses' training. They are, indeed, trained in all sorts of Hospitals, in all sorts of ways, carefully trained in some, carelessly in others; some Hospitals have a preliminary training, some think it worse than useless; in some the Nurses are examined, in some they are not; in some they receive a certificate, and in some they do not; some Nurses are trained for three years, some for two, others, again, are considered efficient after one year's training. It seems hardly fair that all that miscellaneous crowd should be sent out into the world branded "trained," and that those Nurses who have only one year's training and no experience should work under the same conditions, and earn the same money, as those who have given three years' hard work to acquire their profession. No thoughtful Matron but must feel this an evil that requires contending with, and must ask themselves what can be done to protect these Nurses from this growing and pressing evil. Every one who is really a Nurse, or understands what is expected from Nurses, will agree that it requires much patient study, and years of intelligent experience, to make a Nurse of any value; and yet the public, to its own discomfort, will employ, without enquiry or consideration, a Nurse who only calls herself such because she wears a bonnet with a long veil and cloak. Her total want of experience and her colossal ignorance make her quite ready to undertake duties for which she has often neither the training nor the capacity. Her inefficiency would soon be recognised by an experienced Hospital patient, accustomed as he is to the patient care of the thoroughly trained Nurse, acting under the supervision of the thoroughly experienced Sister. But most people who have a private Nurse have not this experience, they do not recognise an inexperienced Nurse when they have her; they pay for a good article and do not get it. I have been numberless times annoyed to find that some Probationer, who has left us without testimonial or certificate, as thoroughly inefficient, has declared herself as trained with us, and on the unsupported testimony of her word has been given work, and been sent out to private patients at a charge of two guineas a week. (Many Matrons of trainings school must have had similar experiences.) In this way many a woman who would not be trusted to nurse the patients in a Hospital, is making two guineas a week in attending to patients who think, because they are paying for a first-rate woman, that they have got her.

What is the cure for this great and growing evil? How can Nurses defend themselves from this unfair, unqualified competition? These are in truth difficult questions, but I think we will find that State Registration is the only efficient cure.

In order to get at the opinions of as many as possible of those who are best qualified to judge, the Matrons' Council sent out a great number of lists of questions on this and on other matters and difficulties which lead up to it. I regret to say that only about twenty-four answers were returned, one of which, I am proud to say, was most fully answered by Miss Nightingale, and although not agreeing with all she says, one feels

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