

certificate would be of great value to Committees in the selection of superintendents of training schools.

I would emphasize the principle, which is now universally admitted in other callings, that a general training is necessary before it is possible properly to profit by a special one, so that in organizing the future curriculum of training it would be necessary that there should be more co-operation between the general and the special hospitals. Such co-operation would be of mutual benefit, as the special hospitals would draw their Nursing staffs from the ranks of those who had had previous experience, and the general hospitals would be able to avail themselves, for training purposes, of the unique advantages of the special hospitals, whereby the nurse pupils would be able to gain expert experience in the care of patients suffering from special diseases. In the future, therefore, it may be hoped that a nurse will not only be required to be thoroughly conversant with, and efficient in, the nursing of general medical and surgical cases, but that she will be required to have gained experience in the details of the nursing of maternity, gynæcological, and ophthalmic cases, of infectious fevers, and of the nursing of the insane. Further, I believe that, in the future, nurses having first gone through a course of general training, will ultimately, like medical men, specially qualify themselves for the nursing of one special branch of disease.

THE REGISTER OF TRAINED NURSES.

In every case it appears to me that the trained nurse should be compelled to register the Certificates which she has received; and that her name and address therefore, with the date of her registration, and with the account of the hospital training she has received, would be published, each year, in the Register of Trained Nurses. Then, the public could at once easily ascertain for themselves, by reference to this book, whether or not any given nurse had been properly educated and was therefore qualified to perform the duties entrusted to her. By this means, the women who at present palm themselves off as trained nurses, without any right or justification, would be speedily suppressed. Anyone who desired to be nursed by an untrained person would obtain such assistance with full knowledge of the fact; but, on the other hand, those who were deceived by being given the services of an untrained woman, when they sought and paid for the assistance of a skilled worker, would have their direct remedy in a criminal court. A public Register, in fact, would prevent at once the frauds which are now so constantly practised upon the sick public.

The Register of Nurses would be placed under the control and supervision of a body specially appointed by the Act of Parliament, by means of

which such a measure could only be obtained. This body, as in the analogous cases of other professions, would be a Council, composed of professional persons, who would lay down the regulations as to the education requisite for admission to the Register; and thus would control the training given in Hospitals, thereby making this both uniform and efficient. At the same time, the Council would possess the power of removing, from the Register, the name of any nurse who, after a full and proper inquiry, proved to be untrustworthy. By this means, the public would once again be directly protected, as nurses would also be, against the black sheep of the calling—by their expulsion from its ranks. The duties of the Council, then, would be to ensure the proper education and subsequent discipline and control of every trained nurse; and with the publication of the State Register of Nurses there would be, for the first time, a definite record and organization formed of the members of the Nursing Profession.

This result can only be brought about by Act of Parliament. Any voluntary measure, such as that carried out by the British Nurses' Association, or by the publication of the Nursing Directory, can only be partial and incomplete. Nothing definite, nothing final, can be achieved until the State renders the present voluntary system compulsory.

There are several questions which have been raised, in reference to this matter, to which this is an appropriate opportunity for a reply. It has been argued that if nurses are so highly educated, their training will be so expensive that they will not be content to work for the poor. This same argument was employed when, in the years 1845 to 1856, the medical profession was demanding the institution of medical registration. But, as a matter of fact, the poor are infinitely better attended to, to-day, than they were fifty years ago, when medical education was chaotic and the medical profession was unorganized. And it must be remembered that the expenses of a medical education must always be far greater than those of a nursing training. A medical student, for example, has to be maintained by his parents with board and lodging throughout his five years' pupilage, whilst heavy fees are paid for his collegiate course. In the case of nurses, while it is probable that some premium would be required from them in the future, as it is now from the pupils and apprentices in other vocations; owing to the economical value of their domestic labour in the wards, the premiums charged would always be much lower than those of the medical student. And, as a practical fact, there are hundreds of thoroughly trained nurses to-day working in villages and country districts, as well as amongst the very poor in our towns, who are paid, and are content to work for, a most meagre salary.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)