

fare, and advancement of their profession at heart, must strive to redress these evils by agreeing to some scheme which will introduce a system of registration depending on the attainment by the nurse of some common standard of excellence which will have to be the object of every nurse worthy of the name, which will force the various training schools to train up to that standard, which will confer on the trained nurse that legal status to which she is justly entitled, and which will close the door on inefficiency and ignorance."

Miss Mollett concluded by quoting from a letter by Sir James Paget to Sir Henry Acland in 1893, expressing his views on the Registration of Trained Nurses as follows:—"I think it is only a question whether it is to be granted at once or a few years hence. The test of 'character' is not really applied in the registration of any class of educated persons, unless it be the clergy. It might have been fairly talked of thirty or forty years ago; but it is becoming absurd to say now that it is necessary for nurses and not for medical men. Here is an example—One of Rolleston's daughters is now a sister at St. Bartholomew's. Why should her 'character' be asked for more than her brother's was when he was registered? And such cases are common. Many brothers become doctors, or dentists, and are registered; their sisters become nurses, and are not registered. Or in the same family, one sister takes a medical qualification, and is registered; another becomes a nurse, and she cannot be registered. The contrast is becoming ridiculous as well as unjust, and must soon come to an end. . . . I should be 'for' registration; but am much 'against' being induced to attend a meeting about it. The older I grow the more I dislike speaking."

Mrs. GROVES (Bristol) was the next speaker, and said:—

Madam President, Ladies,—When asked to speak to-day on the need of State Registration for Nurses, I had to select a few examples, out of many instances which have occurred to my personal knowledge, shewing the great and urgent need of some official Register for Nurses.

I should like, first, to state that it is my deliberate opinion that the demand for Trained Nurses in the Provinces is much greater than can be adequately supplied; hence it is that many untrained and ill-trained women can easily make a livelihood, and will continue to do so, until a legal qualification is required before a woman can practice as a Trained Nurse.

To those amongst us who are used to large and good Training Schools, I am aware my notes will appear exaggerated, and perhaps even incredible, but I can assure you of the absolute truth of my statements. All the cases I mention have occurred during the last five years, which I have spent away from London.

NOTE 1.—I sent to a Private Nurses' Institution, not 130 miles from London, having a large connection (the circular stated that Members of the Royal British Nurses' Association could be sent, if preferred), for a nurse for an important surgical case.

A woman was sent, who by her ignorance and neglect of symptoms endangered the patient's life, and necessitated a further operation. I discovered afterwards this so-called nurse had been through a few months' training as a monthly nurse.

NOTE 2.—From the same place two nurses were

sent to a bad medical case. Nurse number one evidently considered the object for which she had been engaged was to quarrel with everyone concerned in the case. She left the patient once for twenty-four hours, and no one knew whither she retired! Her colleague, whom she left in charge, did not know the use of a clinical thermometer, and had apparently had no training whatever!

But these persons, you will say, were obviously untrained, and by no means nurses. Certainly, you are right, but they wear a nurse's uniform, and there were no means by which the public could recognise that they were untrained nurses.

How is it possible for the public to protect itself against a fraud of this kind until we have a State Register?

NOTE 3.—But to turn to the subject of trained certificated nurses—and it is with reluctance that I approach this side of the subject—wishing to be loyal to my kind and finding it, alas! impossible.

I have had dealings with nurses holding three years' certificates who have never learnt how to pass a catheter; others who have been flagrantly disobedient to the doctor's orders; others who have been clearly culpable of "infamous professional conduct." But owing to the absence of any official authority to whom I could appeal, I have found it impossible to exercise any check on the irregularity of their training and conduct.

NOTE 4.—One more instance: at the present moment a hospital of 25 beds is officered by a Matron, whose only qualification for the post is that she was sometime cook at a provincial hospital.

By one assistant nurse, who has had some training, and who is constantly changing, and by two probationers! The latest recruit as probationer came, I am told, straight out of a factory, and is now in charge of the children's ward.

There is no night nurse.

Until two years ago the operating theatre was adorned with flowers, plants, gold fish, and the family Bible! This place is many miles from a large city, the medical staff are perfectly competent to do major surgery—some of them do it—you may imagine with what results; others, more conscientious, have to send their good cases away, fearing sepsis if they operate.

Although the medical staff have appealed to have the nursing reorganised, they have so far done so in vain; and until our Legislature considers it worth while to give a properly qualified nurse a legal status, a country lay committee may be excused if they, too, consider the matter not worthy their attention.

Still, to me it is astonishing that the public remain so apathetic in the matter of their right to have what they pay for. It is amazing that they are willing to submit to the sacrifice of their comfort, their health, their limbs, and even their lives. The fact is, the public rely upon the existence of an authority which guarantees the adequate training of the nurse they employ, without being aware that such an authority does not exist. It is everybody's business to help in setting this matter right.

Anyone at any time may become a patient, and want a properly trained nurse, and obtain such a one as I have described.

One would think the mere commercial spirit of the British man and woman would arouse itself, and demand redress.

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