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Editorial.

THE BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION AND REGISTRATION.

It is welcome news that at the annual meeting of the British Medical Association, held at Oxford last week, a resolution approving the principle of the Registration of Nurses was carried by a large majority and directed to be sent to the Select Committee on Nursing of the House of Commons.

As our readers are aware, this Association, at its annual meeting in 1895, unanimously resolved: "That in the opinion of this meeting it is expedient that an Act of Parliament should, as soon as possible, be passed providing for the registration of medical, surgical, and obstetric nurses."

On the initiative of the Association, a conference was summoned between representatives of Nursing Bodies and its Parliamentary Bills Committee, so that the Committee should have an opportunity of hearing the views of these bodies as to the desirability of State Registration. Action on the part of the Association was subsequently deferred, this result being largely due to the betrayal of the nurses' interests by certain persons who had come forward to help them to obtain Registration, but who, nevertheless, voted at this Conference against the principle.

We have always believed that the large body of practitioners throughout the country are in favour of the principle of Registration of nurses, for they—and not the medical staffs of our large hospitals, waited on hand and foot by trained and disciplined women, superintended by expert Sisters—come into contact with the evils arising from the present lack of educational standards and of professional control amongst nurses. They thus appreciate the necessity for the establishment of such standards and control as will tend to the safety of the sick public in their charge. It is

very satisfactory, therefore, that, at the present juncture, the British Medical Association should once more have come forward and endorsed its previously-expressed belief in the principle of State Registration for Nurses. The opinion is one which should have, and we believe will have, due weight with the public, the more so that medical men, present at the meeting, represented not only themselves, but the branches of which they were members, thus increasing the value of their vote.

Beyond the public the British Medical Association has certainly earned the gratitude of those nurses who are working to secure the enforcement of a minimum standard of nursing education.

The medical profession have unique opportunities for observing the work of nurses, of judging of its quality and value, and of its bearing upon their own work. They, therefore, before all others, should be in a position to appreciate the worth of good nursing. Further, as the *British Medical Journal* points out, the medical profession in the past asked for Registration, that the State, and the public, might know who were qualified to practise and who were not; the profession also asked for, and obtained, power to purge itself of men guilty of conduct infamous in a professional respect. It is indisputable that the passage of the Medical Acts has conduced to the welfare of the public, and the honour and advancement of the medical profession. It is presumable that the same results would be attained in the ranks of trained nurses if similar powers were granted to them. The safety of the sick public is so bound up with the efficiency of its nurses that it is not surprising this influential and representative Society expressed its support of the principle of Registration. In the name of the profession of nursing we offer our thanks to the British Medical Association for its action.

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