

deplorable state of things will be that the Central Board will be authorised to keep a register which will contain the names, addresses, and qualifications of all those who have been passed by them, with power to remove from that register the name of any nurse who is convicted of unprofessional conduct. This authority will act in two ways: first by removing those who are really bad, and by bracing up the weak. A nurse will know that her life's work is at stake, that a power exists which can and will remove her from the ranks of her profession should she prove herself unworthy, and this moral stimulus will brace many a weaker sister when she is hardly pressed. For the rest, they will know that the same power is guarding the honour of their profession, and they, too, will be strengthened to uphold that honour and keep it bright and untarnished before the world.

What would be the advantages to medical men? They would know that a registered nurse meant a *trained* nurse; they would be sure that she had received the instruction she professed to have had, that she has the knowledge and technical skill necessary to undertake their cases, that there will be no fear of orders neglected because the nurse "has no faith in the doctor"; they will know that the lives of their patients are in trustworthy keeping.

Does all this exist to-day? We know quite the contrary.

Doctors who live in large towns can, and often do, know something of the nurses they employ; but when there comes a rush of work they must do as the country doctor generally does—send to an institution; they must in that case rely upon the head of the institution for both the character and training of the nurses sent.

As many of these places are run as commercial speculations, the proprietors do not always study too closely the amount or quality of the training of their employees, and sometimes character is not too minutely investigated (if they get so-called trained nurses to work for them for a small sum per year, why worry about these things?), with the result that patients' lives and doctors' reputations are being endangered to line the pockets of unscrupulous people.

That the medical men of the country realise this is proved by the resolution passed at Oxford.

How will the public benefit? By the greater security which will be ensured by the hall-mark of the Central Board. They will know that the registered nurse means one skilled in her profession, and they will know that when applying for a trained nurse they will get what they pay for. At present many people pay the same fees for unskilled attendance as for skilled, because they have no means of distinguishing the one from the other.

How can people verify the credentials of a nurse sent in by the doctor from an institution? In the hurry and stress which usually accompanies illness

they have no thought beyond getting someone to whom they can trust their sick one; it is only later that they have the opportunity to find out about the suitability of the person installed. Then if she is agreeable to the patient, that is often sufficient; if not, she is considered a necessary evil, and it is concluded that all nurses are the same, and her services are dispensed with as soon as possible.

In regard to her technical skill the family frequently have no means of judging; to them anyone in a cap and apron, and calling herself a trained nurse, must of necessity know everything, and if, as so often happens, they have never experienced the services of a really highly-trained nurse, anything passes muster.

I think that is why so many untrained but kindly women have so much work; they know a little more about nursing than the average woman, and to the uninitiated that little assumes vast proportions, and, together with a kindly nature, procures them many recommendations as very good nurses. Should, however, an emergency arise, then suspicion is apt to be aroused, but so long as no extraordinary demands are made upon their knowledge they pass.

State Registration will ensure at least a minimum amount of knowledge and skill.

If, however, anyone prefers the kindly, untrained, unregistered nurse to the equally kind but skilled nurse, there will be nothing to prevent them employing such; *only*, they will know what they are paying for.

If nurses are better fitted for their work by a uniform training, the public receive the benefit in better care for the sick.

If the black sheep are eliminated from the profession, that means greater security for the public.

State Registration cannot be looked upon as merely a means of aggrandisement for nurses, for whatever is done to improve the status, education and control of nurses must necessarily benefit the public at large.

Therefore, it behoves all who have the true welfare of the sick at heart to further in every way possible the registration by the State of trained nurses.

MARY BURR.

A New School of Massage.

The National Hospital for the Paralysed and Epileptic has opened a new school for teaching massage. The school has been started under the direction of the Medical Committee of the hospital. Certificates will be issued to pupils who satisfy the examiners in anatomy, physiology, the practical work of medical rubbing, and the gymnastic movements required by the physicians of the National Hospital, and usually employed in this country. Madame Gripenwald, a Swedish instructor, has been placed in charge of the school, and only female pupils are taken at present.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)