

attempting to stay and prevent reform which is so urgently called for. However, that concerns us very little, and we can only express our condolence with you, at once, upon being so unfortunate as to be the prominent players in such an eminently unpopular game."

We propose now to continue the consideration of the subject in another direction. How is the fitness of any given woman to be registered as a Trained Nurse, to be decided upon? In other words, what tests must be imposed upon any candidate for Registration, before her name can be entered upon the Register as a fully Trained Nurse. To begin with, it is necessary to make one or two points quite clear. In the first place, it is quite certain that when the Royal Charter authorises the new system, it will, according to invariable rule and precedent in such cases, also provide and declare that all women at that time engaged in nursing the sick, shall have the undoubted right to demand that they shall be registered at once. The theory of the law is, that no action shall be taken which is retrospective in character; that when a new enactment is made, it shall affect people in the future, but not in the slightest degree in the past. Thus, in all Acts of Parliament, English fair-play insists upon the protection of what is termed "existing rights"; or, if those must, for the good of the whole community, be infringed upon, then care is taken that due and proper compensation shall be paid. Precisely the same rule holds good on professional subjects. If a man has practised a lawful calling, he obtains, in the sight of the law, an inherent right to continue his work, without let or hindrance from any future legislation. So it came to pass that when, in 1815, the "Apothecaries' Act" decided that no man should in future pretend to be a doctor, unless he had received a diploma or qualification to practise as such, a "saving clause" provided that any man who could prove, that he had ever prescribed a single box of pills for any one else, should, during the rest of his life, be recognised as a medical man. The result, of course, was that thousands of people, absolutely destitute of medical knowledge, at once became acknowledged as apothecaries. Not one of them suffered one penny in pocket, nor one ounce in reputation, by an Act which practically transformed the medical profession into a calling only open, from that time forward, to educated men. In a few years, all the quacks had retired, and the public thenceforth could distinguish easily between the real and false medical men. So, likewise, when the Dentists' Act was passed ten years ago, it was made illegal for anyone in future to call himself a dentist, under pain of a heavy fine, unless he were registered as the possessor of some medical diploma or dental licence, or—and here again came in the fair-play clause—unless he had practised as a dentist before July 22, 1878—the date upon which

the Act became law. Upon the Dental Register all sorts of untrained and unscientific people claimed therefore to have their names placed, upon the ground that they had taken out teeth before the said Act came into force, and all had their claim allowed. But, in this case again, in a few years these persons will have retired or be dead, and then, without any injury to existing rights, the public's teeth will be protected against unskilled manipulation, unless, of course, the public deliberately prefers and chooses to submit to such. So, in all our consideration of the way in which Registration is to be carried out, we must remember this great cardinal fact. The Royal Charter, which authorises Registration, will doubtless declare, that all women who can prove that they are then actually engaged in nursing the sick, may claim, within a certain stated time, to have their names enrolled upon the Register. But, that day once past, for all future time, no one will be registered unless she can prove herself to be an efficient Nurse. No harm or unfairness will be worked to any woman at present, anyhow or anywhere, engaged in Nursing, but in a few years there will be but few untrained ones left upon the Register, and then Nursing will be essentially a scientific profession, and its real members easily distinguishable from any pretenders to the title of Trained Nurse. It will be said, that this means that it must be some years before Registration will distinguish Trained Nurses from untrained. Of course it does, to some extent, but then we must remember this: it only furnishes one more argument for having Registration enforced as soon as possible, because the longer it is delayed, the longer will it be before the Register becomes purified from the dross, and the more untrained, unskilled women will there be, who will be able to claim to be enrolled. And, once again, let it be remembered that to-day, not only is there no distinction between skilled and unskilled Nurses, but Nursing itself is not recognised by the law in any way. This cardinal fact, however, being plain—that all women now engaged in Nursing, whether trained or not, will, almost certainly, be eligible for Registration, in the first instance—the greatly important question arises: What tests are to be imposed upon candidates, *in future*, before their names are placed upon the Register? This is a matter upon which we would earnestly invite our readers to give us their individual and separate opinions. We have our own ideas upon the subject, and we know, from reliable information from various parts of the kingdom, what views Nurses are forming. We must defer, to a future occasion, a detailed consideration of this question, and will then willingly quote any correspondence sent to us upon it. We can only now explain its importance thus. The Register will be for Trained Nurses only. How is the Board, who will, we presume, be appointed to control the scheme, to be able to judge whether any given

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