

8. If it is not the practice at your hospital to have the nurse's certificate signed by the chairman of committee, by a representative of the medical authorities, and by the matron or superintendent of nurses, do you see any objection to the same being done, if thought necessary, to meet the requirements of the register?

9. Would your committee of management appoint a lady or gentleman, or both, to represent the interests of your nurses in connection with the present movement to establish a register? If so, would you kindly furnish me with their names and addresses, that they may be communicated with?

We also append the *Lancet's* critique, and commend the same for careful perusal.

"A small association, formed about four years ago to consider and discuss matters connected with hospital management, soon saw the wisdom of directing its attention to attempts at legislation for nurses. The only result of its efforts has been the production of *fiasco* after *fiasco* with ridiculous regularity. For example, last October it issued a circular offering to register any nurse who had had one year's training on payment of half-a-crown. The failure this time was rather worse than usual. Not only did nurses *not* register themselves under such auspices, but most of the matrons of hospitals of any standing who were then connected with it resigned their membership at once. Forthwith, the association appointed what it was pleased to call a 'sectional committee' to investigate the subject of registration, and its report appeared in a daily paper on Wednesday, and almost confesses that the investigation has been futile. The committee, it appears, issued a paper containing nine questions to thirty-four nurse-training schools. Only nineteen of these took the trouble to answer at all. To the first question, 'Do you consider a general system of registration desirable for trained nurses?' it is stated nine replied in the affirmative, but the remaining ten '*desire to be left alone!*' (*sic*)—an answer which cannot be said to be exhaustive on the subject. After this we are not surprised to read that 'some of the answers are simply the individual opinions of the matrons, or of medical superintendents, or of some prominent member of the medical staff of the hospital.' Nor is it wonderful that many of the replies are of 'doubtful character' (we trust no 'bad language' is meant by this); nor that there was an 'entire absence of any reply at all to some questions'; nor that 'considerable divergence of opinion' was found to exist. But after all this, after only obtaining nineteen answers, of whom nine approved of registration and ten plaintively besought 'to be let alone' by this sectional committee, will it be believed that this report is actually sent forth to the public with this remark: 'It will, doubtless, attract a great deal of attention as embodying the views of the majority of the nurse-training schools!' Still less will it be believed that the committee absolutely considers the question settled, and announces that registration 'would be attended with disastrous results.' No wonder the unhappy ten implored 'to be let alone.' But we must speak seriously even about this ridiculous report. Registration of nurses primarily affects 15,000 nurses, 27,000 medical men, and 37,000,000 of people. Very indirectly and distantly does it affect ten or even nineteen managers of nurse-training schools. The two medical men who have signed this report, and made themselves therefore responsible for it, must know that registration, which is only for nurses who have finished their training, can only secondarily affect institutions where nurses are being trained. These two gentlemen, who have made public what to the lay reader is an authoritative protest against registration, ought to know, if they do not, that the truth is all the other way; that the

leaders of the medical and nursing professions are almost unanimous in desiring registration for nurses; and that the British Nurses' Association, founded by the President of the College of Surgeons and other leading medical men, in conjunction with matrons and lady nurses of numerous hospitals, to obtain a Royal Charter to gain registration as its primary object, was joined in the first few weeks by some hundreds of members, including the matrons of St. Bartholomew's, Guy's, Charing Cross, University College, Middlesex, the Royal Free, and more than a hundred other London and provincial hospitals. We deeply regret that the document should have been issued to the public at all, and still more that it should have been sent forth on the responsibility of two medical men."

Following this, the *Manchester Guardian* very sensibly treats the matter from the public point of view, and says:—

"The committee appointed by the Hospitals' Association to inquire into the question of the registration of trained nurses has reported against the feasibility of any such scheme for the present. Inquiries made at various hospitals which undertake the training of nurses have led to the conviction that the time is not yet ripe for concerted action in the matter. Out of thirty-four institutions to which inquiries were addressed, only nineteen furnished the desired information, and of these the greater number, 'comprising the leading and best known training schools,' gave an opinion adverse to the scheme. Each hospital of course has its own system of training and registration, and is naturally content therewith. But whether the general public has reason to be content is not so clear. In the leading hospitals it may well be that the training is the best that could be devised; but as long as there is no strong spur to excellence it is at least conceivable that the lesser hospitals may lag very far behind. To the question as to the length of curriculum desirable for a nurse, answers were returned naming periods varying from one to three years—a diversity of opinion which is anything but reassuring. On such an important point at least we might expect to find that experience had brought about unanimity of practice. That it has failed to do so gives fresh ground for the advocacy of a common system of registration. The question will not be allowed to sleep, and the problem for medical authorities will be how to secure the advantages of a general system without impairing the excellence of particular methods. Few greater boons have been conferred on suffering humanity than the institution of trained nurses, and high and low alike are interested in the maintenance of its excellence. As medical and surgical science advances, the demands upon the skill and dexterity of the nurse increase, and a more elaborate training becomes indispensable. In some way or other the demand must be met, and the public must be provided at the same time with the means of knowing whether a nurse has undergone the full necessary preparation for her work."

We are at one entirely with our contemporaries, and strongly emphasize the remarks of the *Lancet* in its concluding paragraph. The whole subject is deplorable in its results, so far as the objects of the Hospitals Association and its Joint something-or-other-with-a-long-name Committee are concerned, and presents food for deep and serious reflection, as to the advisability of well intentioned individuals vainly endeavouring to cater and legislate for a class they are not in the slightest possible touch with, judging from the little encouragement their efforts have so far met with.

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