

accepted this offer, and so the question of Registration, which, as we pointed out last week, was then occupying their thoughts, came to be openly discussed in connection with the Hospitals' Association. So little, however, did Mr. BURDETT understand of the subject, in 1886, that—although he attempted then, and since, to assume a most intimate knowledge of it—he wrote that, in his opinion, the Sectional Committee would do well to “confine their consideration of Registration to considering how far it is desirable or possible to establish a Register for Trained Nurses in connection with the Hospitals' Association, so that the Lady Superintendents and Medical Men may write from the country to the Association, and have a reasonable assurance that they will thus be able to ascertain the character of a Nurse with reasonable certainty, and so protect themselves from risks to which they are at present exposed.” In other words, Mr. BURDETT'S idea was that Nurses wanted a great central Registry Office similar to that in vogue for domestic servants, and his plan was to establish this office in connection with the Hospitals' Association. In fact, the simple scheme was that Nurses were to be organized and controlled, and their “characters” taken and retailed under the superintendence of an unprofessional body. This result clearly did not at first occur to the Matrons composing the Sectional Committee, but they continued to hold meetings and discuss the details of Registration amongst themselves. They practically arrived at the conclusion that no Nurse should be registered who had been trained for less than three years, and then disagreements arose. Mr. BURDETT expressed the view that one year's hospital work was quite sufficient, and there can be little doubt that, at that time, it would have very considerably limited the number of Nurses who could have come under the control of the Hospitals' Association if the three years' standard had been enforced. But the leading Matrons on the Committee were oblivious of the advantages of numbers, to the Association, and stood firm for quality, not quantity, in regard to the Register. Then, it appears that Mr. BURDETT wrote rude letters to the Secretary of the Sectional Committee, whereat

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the ladies expressed their disapproval. The next move was that the Council of the Association calmly appropriated the work of its Sectional Committee, over-rode the Committee's decision as to the necessity for a three years' standard, and in October, 1887, issued the following notice:—

“The rules for the register of trained Nurses have been printed, and will be forwarded, with form of application, to any Nurse sending a stamped and addressed envelope to Mr. HOWARD J. COLLINS, Secretary, The Hospitals' Association, Norfolk House, Norfolk Street, W.C. (1.) A Nurse seeking to be placed on the register, must furnish satisfactory proof that she has worked for at least one year on the staff of a Hospital or Infirmary, and that she has been trained in the duties of a Nurse. She must also bring a certificate, or testimonial, of good, moral, and general conduct from the Matron or Lady Superintendent of the Hospital or Infirmary in which she has been trained. (2.) An entrance fee of 2s. 6d., which covers the cost of the Association's badge, and an annual subscription of one shilling will be charged to each Nurse. (3.) A Nurse will forfeit her badge for intemperance or other serious misconduct, or neglect of professional duties. (4.) Nurses making application to be placed on the register must first communicate with the Secretary by letter, addressed to the office of The Hospitals' Association, Norfolk House, Norfolk Street, London, W.C.”

The chief members of the Sectional Committee, finding that their deliberate decision and judgment on the necessary standard of training had been ignored, and realising that the Register would clearly be under the superintendence of a few business men, and that, in fact, the attempt was to be made to organize Nurses under unprofessional control, immediately took the only course open to them. They resigned, in a body, their membership of the Hospitals' Association, and, after consultation with the leaders of the medical profession, they determined to protect their calling from the interference of ignorant outsiders, by uniting Nurses together into a powerful body under the guidance, and with the support, of medical men alone.

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