

me to dilate at any length, and, indeed, seeing that there has for some years past been much difference of opinion as to the extent and nature of education for Nurses, it would be improper and unnecessary if the Chairman, even if there were time, for full discussion of the subject should initiate such discussion. To those who, like myself, remember the time when we could not rely upon the assistance, in private, of Nurses with any education, the change which has grown up in the last few years is as remarkable as any change in the fabric of modern society. When I was a young physician in this place, I must, I fear, go back five-and-forty years, and I remember, with my servant, going to eleven houses in different parts of the town in the middle of a winter's night to find a respectable and trustworthy woman to assist me in the care of a delirious undergraduate in college rooms. We have now, thanks to the progress of this subject throughout the world, and especially I must say as far as I know in England, we have a Nurses' Institution with Nurses really trained in the art and duties of their profession. Amongst them ladies of the highest general education, visiting as district Nurses the lowest dwellings of the poor, all ready to take charge under the direction of the Physician or Surgeon, in sickness or in operation, either in the Nurses Home itself, or in the abode of the sick of any and every class of life. This great change has been largely due to the almost forgotten training of Kaiserwerth, but more particularly to the outcome of the Nursing by English ladies in the terrible Crimean war under the guidance of Florence Nightingale, who went out there and taught the ladies of England that they could live in barracks and on the slaughter-fields in that district, and serve their country and their God in that manner. Her Royal Highness, your President, will, I am sure, permit me to say in her presence that no one since that time has more resolutely set herself both by example and personal effort to promote and guide the efforts of those who desire to see the Nursing of the sick attached to a responsible profession. Consisting of women of high personal character, thorough and suitable training, to aid in those many departments of medicine and surgery, which in modern times require unceasing care by competent persons acting under skilled medical and surgical guidance. It was not long after the Crimean war that efforts in the direction of complete and uniform recognition of the medical profession throughout the kingdom were made. Ten years of discussion took place before in 1858 a register of the medical profession was made, setting forth the qualifications which, being recognised by Act of Parliament, entitle a person to be a legally qualified medical practitioner. Twenty years have elapsed since it was suggested that some sort of registration might be of service to distinguish the skilful and highly trained women, who, by reason of improvement of our Hospitals, and the excellency in every department of their administration, were becoming a really honourable and cultivated profession in one of the most difficult and blessed works on which a woman can be engaged. There were causes for this delay into which I will not here enter. The mode of such registration, if carried out at all, presented many difficulties. It has fallen to the lot of her Royal Highness, your President, to undertake the arduous task of solving all the difficulties to which I have just alluded. In the document with which most of you are acquainted, the solution is attempted. I need hardly say I think that Her Royal Highness, the translator of Esmarch's "First Aid to the Injured,"

more than ten years ago, was the one woman in England who would be naturally accepted as the head and guide in such an endeavour. This endeavour has now become a fact. Your Association has received from the Government a Charter under the terms of which a record can be published of those persons whom Her Royal Highness' Association judges to be wholly reliable to be designated as British Nurses, recognised under a Charter, for the working of which some of the most distinguished representatives of British medicine and surgery therein included are responsible. But from all these questions I pass away. I can only, as the person who was desired by Her Royal Highness to-day to preside at your meeting, wish the work God-speed. It seems to me that within the range and terms of the Charter, there are ample powers for such adjustment and amendment as experience and thoughtful care may from time to time seem to require. Before we part, I hope you will allow me to say a few words on the relation of your professional work to the whole organisation of modern biological studies in a portion of which, seriously considered, you have been, or are supposed to have been, trained and are to occupy your lives. Will you give me five minutes to say in what sense I make this somewhat serious remark. I have been asked to show such of you as think fit the University Museum. To take you over that would occupy the rest of your day. To tell you the aim and intention of it is to be done in a few sentences, and then the relation of it to your studies will be, a once apparent. It is a place which was founded about forty years ago for the study of the universe. By what means is this study to be effected? First, we have the department of mathematics, or of magnitude and number in the widest sense conceivable by our faculties applied to all matter. Then physics and chemistry, or the composition and nature of matter wherever we can appreciate, know, or study it. Now, observe that these three vast departments are, in the present state of knowledge, adding from day to day to our conception of all matter of which the Universe is composed; the millions on millions of stars, the wandering comets, the planets of which our little earth is but, in respect of dimensions, an insignificant example. On this our planet, through countless years, organisms of the most varied nature have arisen, vegetable and animal as we call them, extinct and still existing, born, growing, dying. In this unceasing process of life, decay and death, of things animate and inanimate, are contained the marvellous problems connected with light, heat, electricity, and explained by anatomy, physiology, pathology, medicine. There are several other departments which I will not enter into in detail. But observe what that comes to. The structure of man, the use of all his parts, the way in which those parts can be injured and destroyed, the way they can be preserved from being destroyed, and the way, when injured in the course of being destroyed, they may be preserved and restored. There is your vocation, but it is a vocation which is part of the great science of the whole universe. I should be quite wrong if I said I thought that summed up the whole; far from it. It is quite true that the scientific knowledge of disease is based upon all those scientific questions of physics, chemistry, anatomy, and all the rest of it, and the growth and development of our race. That is true, but none know better than in an assembly of this kind that it does not depend upon mere knowledge and mere reason, upon the mere study of such things, or upon the mere consideration of the material organisation of

---

The "NURSING RECORD" has a Larger Sale than any other Journal devoted solely to Nursing Work.

---

The "NURSING RECORD" has a Larger Sale than any other Journal devoted solely to Nursing Work.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)