

among persons practising as Nurses, and thereby insuring mutual counsel, comfort, and support, and for the purpose of disseminating to the public at large information respecting such persons, is likely to prove of much public benefit, &c."

The writers of the letter go on to say that "the following points should be clearly borne in mind:—

(1) "No professional privilege will be obtained by the Nurses whose names appear upon the list."

The reply is that a Nurse whose name appears upon the list will gain the highly important privilege of being able at any time, to establish, by reference to a book published under the authority of a chartered corporation, her indefeasible claim to the title which she assumes; and that she will not be liable to be confounded with the half-trained Probationers who, to the great detriment of the sick, are now sent out as Nurses by various public and private institutions. This privilege is one which will increase in value and importance year by year, as its true meaning comes to be more and more fully understood by the medical profession and by the public.

(2) "The list will have nothing in common with legal registers of the medical or other professions, but will simply be a list of Nurses published by the Association."

This, in a sense, is not only true, but obvious. The Privy Council has no power to authorize the issue of a compulsory or "legal" register, which could only be established by an Act of Parliament. There can be little doubt, however, that experience of the value of the Association register will in due time lead to such an Act being obtained. In the meanwhile the list will be a book containing information of great importance, not easily accessible elsewhere, and rendered trustworthy by the character and position of the corporation from which it proceeds.

(3) "No Nurse whose name appears on the list will have any right to use the title of registered Nurse."

This is absurd. Every Nurse whose name appears on the list will have a right to describe herself as "registered by the Royal British Nurses' Association," and would be likely to prefer this explicit statement to anything more vague.

The letter concludes by an assertion that a comparison of the draft charter with that which was granted "clearly shows that the Privy Council have recognized the evils which might directly or indirectly have been occasioned by the establishment of a chartered register as originally proposed."

The only differences between the draft charter and the charter as granted are to be found in the explicit approval of the principle of the register which we have already quoted, in a change in the order of succession of some of the clauses, in the introduction of a new clause conferring powers which were not asked for, and in the fact that the original wording has in two places been so altered as to possess a more general character, but in both so as to extend and enlarge, and not to curtail, the privileges which the Association sought to obtain.

From the substance of the letter we pass on to the signatories. They are 33 in number, and 26 of the 33 are officials of one or other of the following Hospitals—namely, the London, St. Thomas's, Guy's, the Westminster, King's College, and Charing Cross, all or nearly all of these being Institutions which make, or endeavour to make, profits by sending out Nurses to private houses. The first principle of the Royal British Nurses' Association is that no Nurse should be considered fit for the responsibilities of private nursing, as these are now understood, until she has received three years' training in a

Hospital or Hospitals of approved efficiency; and this view has been accepted and endorsed by the Lords' Committee on Hospitals. Now the London Hospital habitually sends out Probationers of only one year's training, pays them as Probationers, charges for them as skilled Nurses, and has derived, from the difference between the wages of the Nurses and their earnings, a net profit of as much as £1,700 in a single year. Charing Cross Hospital, we believe, is only beginning to send out Nurses, and we do not know the character of its arrangements; although from the company in which we now find its officials, we fear that these arrangements leave much to be desired. The Westminster Hospital has for a long time sent out so-called Nurses after only one year's training. Guy's Hospital sends them out after only 18 months. King's College Hospital conceals the accounts of its private Nursing department even from its subscribers, and its course of action can therefore only be conjectured. Finally, St. Thomas's Hospital "registers" its Probationers privately, as trained Nurses, at the end of one year, although its authorities object, professedly on "principle," to the issue of a public register. Twenty-six of our 33 critics are therefore persons who are engaged, more or less, in maintaining a vicious system which it is one of the objects of the Association to reform; and we can only thank them for having, in their feeble way, directed the attention of the public to the gulf which separates their aims from ours.

Finally, we are bound to recognize that, among the 26 signatories as well as among the remaining seven, there are persons who would not knowingly attach their names to statements which are untrue in fact and injurious in intention. Such persons must, of course, have been misled by defective information; and we may fairly call upon them to read both the proposed and the actual charter for themselves, and then to take such action as may seem good to them.

On behalf of the Executive Committee,
We are, Sir, your most obedient servants,
W. BEZLY THORNE, } Hon. Secs.
GRACE GORDON, }
DAISY ROBINS, Secretary.

8, Oxford-circus-avenue, W., July 5.

* * *

I HEAR, on good authority, that great efforts are being made to start an Association for the Registration of Midwives, which medical men are being requested to join, and which they are being told has no connection of any sort with the Midwives' Institute—a body incorporated as a Limited Liability Company, and, so far as I can learn, with an equally limited membership—whose ridiculous Bills for Midwives' Registration elicited such crushing criticism two years ago. But I have reasons to believe that the few active workers in the Institute are the promoters of the new Association.

* * *

A VALUED correspondent writes from Chicago:—
"The so-called Nursing Congress is over. It was what is called a 'fizzle' in this country, and the only really good paper read was on the subject of founding an American Nurses' Association—some-

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

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