

Board of the Royal British Nurses' Association, or the Committee of the Registered Nurses' Society, will not be deceived by false certificates, however much these may mislead the uninitiated public, and the result, therefore, is that the Nurses, to whom we have alluded, are debarred both from the professional status and the chances of first-class work for which they seek.

It is, perhaps, unnecessary to point out how eminently unjust this is, and it is difficult to believe that, when this is brought to the knowledge of the Committees of the Hospitals which pursue this system, they will not immediately take steps to prevent such proceedings in future. The fact that the certificate is untrue makes it valueless, and the time which the Nurse has spent in its acquisition is, therefore, entirely wasted. It must be remembered that whereas a Nurse, who has been trained under such conditions, and who consequently has to make up one or two years to satisfy the requirements for Registration, can, perhaps, now, obtain work for that time in special, if not in general, Hospitals; but there is every reason to believe that, as the training becomes more distinct and better defined, it will grow increasingly difficult for Nurses to obtain such work, except as part of a regular training.

If Registration were merely a temporary system, this result might be ignored, but, seeing that all experience proves that, once the system has been started for any profession, its great advantages cause it continually to develop and extend, it is certain that there will be a growing demand on the part of the medical profession and the public, that only Registered Nurses shall be employed in the best class of private nursing. To debar, therefore, women from enrolment upon the present or future Register of Nurses is, practically, to debar them from the best class of professional work, to place them on a level with the amateur and the quack, and to do them irreparable professional harm. Such results cannot be regarded with equanimity by any Committee of honourable men, for it is easy to foresee the increasing difficulties which will be experienced by insufficiently trained Nurses in gaining their livelihood in the future. It is, therefore, of the first importance to those who desire to enter the profession and to become recognized, hereafter, as thoroughly trained Nurses, that they should be most careful in the selection of the training school which they enter. They must ascertain, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that the term of training for which they engage themselves shall be education in the wards, under competent supervision and instruction, and that they shall not, for a longer or shorter period of that training, be compelled to experiment upon the public in private houses, at the expense of that public, to their own detriment, and for the sole benefit of the Hospital which thus makes money out of them instead of fulfilling its contract to educate them efficiently.

THE WORLD'S FAIR.

The final reports and business details of the ever memorable Chicago Exhibition have now been concluded. So far as this country goes, there is not much for us to be proud of. Not only did the Government allot to the British Royal Commission less than a half of the amount granted to their organisers by France, and only a third of that spent by Germany, but English exhibitors held aloof in the most marked manner from participation in the exhibition. The Royal Commission's report, which is just about to be presented to Parliament, mentions the significant figures that there were only 2,236 British exhibitors altogether, and of these no less than 1,138 were found in the women's work department, a fact which, at any rate, speaks volumes so far as the part which women have played in this exhibition is concerned. So far as Nursing goes, it is admitted both publicly in official reports, and privately, that the British Nursing section was the most complete of the professional exhibits from this or any other country. The report of the Royal Commission refers to it as "A very complete and interesting collection of Nursing appliances," and a letter which appears in another column from the President of the Board of Lady Managers is eloquent testimony to the advantages which such an exhibit has conferred upon members of our profession in the United States and in other countries. Whatever, then, our manufacturers may think and say concerning the difficulties which were thrown in their way at the recent exhibition, Nurses can feel that in the first International Exhibition in which they have taken part, this country, by common consent, has taken the leading place. It is to be hoped that Great Britain will keep the position which it has now gained, and that improvements and reforms will be so pressed forward that when the next exhibition is held, British Nurses will still be found in the van of progress.

MIDWIVES' REGISTRATION.

This question is advancing towards its inevitable conclusion with rapid strides. The promoters of a Parliamentary Bill have succeeded in drawing the attention of the public, and of the medical profession, to the grave dangers which surround such unnecessary legislation, and to the irregular methods which are at present in vogue. The consequence is that, while on the one hand there is a powerful combination being formed of medical men who are determined to prevent the passage of such a meddling and mischievous Bill, on the other hand, discredit is being thrown upon those few members of the profession who are, in the most unjustifiable manner attempting to maintain an obsolete class of workers by bestowing upon them certificates which must tend to mislead the public as to the capabilities of these women. The General Medical Council, by its proceedings last week, reflected this strong professional feeling, and furnished a sufficient warning to those who are engaged in such questionable practices. They may take it for granted that the profession is only now beginning to be aroused upon this matter, and that those foolish persons who are attempting to injure their brethren and to deceive the public, are drawing upon themselves opprobrium, which will increase as time goes on. They are only doing harm to themselves, and no good whatever to a scheme which is doomed to ultimate failure and collapse.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)