

ignoring the Association." The Counsel for the opposition was unable to dispute this statement, and, unhappily, the Association possessed too many documentary proofs in support of its Counsel's assertion for any contradiction to be possible. Since then, however, and especially since the Charter was granted, most Institutions have recognized their public duty in this matter, and we understand that all information for which they have been requested, concerning their former Nurses, has been at once and courteously supplied.

It is, therefore, with great regret that we learn that a recent application to the Matron of a Poor Law Infirmary, from the Registration Board of the Corporation, asking for information concerning one of her former Nurses, has not been replied to, and that the Nurse in question has reported that she has received from the Matron a letter declining, in the most positive terms, to give any information of any description, concerning her Nurses, to the Association.

This lady has clearly misunderstood her position, and that of the Corporation. She is the official of a public Institution, responsible to the Guardians of the Poor of her parish. The Corporation is a body possessing duties described by the highest Court in the realm to be of public utility, and, by pleasure of the Crown, holding powers to carry out the duty, for the public welfare, of informing the public, concerning the character of the technical education of those Nurses whom it is pleased to enrol upon its list. A public official who refuses, to such a body, information which is vital to its work, is taking upon herself a very serious and a very strange responsibility; and she certainly should not feel surprised if attention is publicly drawn to her proceedings, nor if she is considered very ignorant of the precise position which she holds.

There is also another aspect of the question which is of importance. The rapid success achieved by the Registered Nurses' Society is conclusive evidence of the manner in which the public recognizes the protection to the sick involved in the system of Registration. It is, indeed, becoming quite apparent that in a short time those Nurses who are not Registered will find medical men disinclined to accept them as really trained. Anyone, therefore, who attempts to prevent a Nurse obtaining the privilege and benefit of enrolment on the list maintained under the authority of the Royal Charter, is doing that Nurse both present and prospective injury, and is, therefore, committing an injustice to the Nurse which cannot be extenuated.

We need only add that we draw attention to this case because of the principles which it involves, and not because we attach any particular importance to the proceedings of an individual who holds such humble views not only of ordinary courtesy but also of the duties of her position.

THE DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER.

Once more, and for the thirteenth time, the Bill to legalise marriages between a man and his deceased wife's sister has been before our Parliament, and for the thirteenth time it has been defeated—this time by a majority of nine. The speeches of those who opposed the measure once more exhibited the peculiarity which has previously been noted of similar utterances—an entire absence of argument. The only objections to this legislation appear to us to rest upon sentiment and clericalism, and both of a most irrational and illogical type. If objections had been taken to marriages of consanguinity, and it had been made illegal for first cousins to marry, there would have been much which could with force and propriety have been urged. For it is indisputable that the old prejudice against such marriages is founded upon physical facts, and that the offspring of such unions are endowed with a double share of every family taint inherited by their parents. But to forbid marriages, which can have no harmful result from such a physiological reason, between persons who might reasonably desire to marry, is to stretch legislation into tyranny. It does not prevent such unions, it only makes them illicit, and so throws the consequences and the resulting stigma upon the woman and the children; and these have, therefore, a perfect right to complain that unnecessary laws should place such a ban upon them. Pedantic slaves to precedent are the prominent opponents of a more rational legislation, just as they have been the opponents of reform and progress throughout the ages. But it is a matter of deep regret to all who, like ourselves, venerate the Church of England, that its chief officials should prove themselves imbued with such narrow-minded bigotry. The very Scriptures which they inculcate point the case against them, for they show that more than one patriarch, whose life and character is held up for our edification, married sisters, not singly, but in pairs.

THE ROYAL SOCIETY'S CONVERSAZIONE.

The Rooms of the Royal Society, were crowded as usual, on the occasion of the Ladies' Night, last Thursday, with the leaders not only of science, but of rank and fashion. All the most recent inventions and discoveries, especially in electrical appliances, were illustrated; and, from Mummy cloth six thousand years old to the telautograph invented within the last few months, and now on its trial, in this country, the exhibits were as widely diverse and as interesting as usual. The large number of medical men who were present testified to the often noted fact, that science nowadays obtains its largest share of recruits from the ranks of medicine. In the Archives room the telautograph attracted a constant flow of visitors throughout the evening. This instrument enables anyone to telegraph their facsimile handwriting twenty miles or more, and is now being tested at the General Post-office to see if it is practicable for longer distances. In that case the old-fashioned dot and dash machine will be superseded, and we shall receive our messages actually in the handwriting of the sender, if necessary. Experts, however, seem to think that the method of communication must be simplified before this system can be widely employed.

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