

in effecting reforms was resisted step by step by those connected with great Hospitals, who maintained a lower standard of training than the three years' system advocated by the Association, while strenuous opposition was also made by those Hospital authorities who deceived the public by sending out to the sick in private houses, probationers from their wards, pretending to the employer that these were trained Nurses, and making the employer pay for their services upon the recognised scale, but paying the probationer a minute salary, on the avowed ground that she was only a pupil.

In short, whatever interests were threatened by improvements in the Nursing Profession, by the consolidation of the Profession, or by the institution of reforms in the public interest, united together to oppose the system of Registration of Nurses; united together to write abusive letters in the press, and to publish pamphlets denouncing the Royal British Nurses' Association; united together to prevent the Board of Trade granting their license to the Association to become incorporated under the Companies Acts; and finally united together to oppose the Association before the Privy Council. One by one those efforts were met and frustrated; step by step the Association succeeded, and with its final success there was founded the Chartered Corporation of Nurses. In the words of Her Majesty's Privy Council, "A permanent Association formed for the purpose of maintaining a closer connection 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."

We have already shown what great results have followed to every individual Nurse from the improvement in the organisation and position of her profession, and how bitterly and strongly this improvement was resisted by unprofessional persons. It is, however, still asserted, chiefly by those who have utilised Nurses in the past merely as producers of large pecuniary profits, that the Nursing Profession should be controlled by unprofessional people. In the first place, precedent is against such an argument because no one will pretend that the medical profession, the Church, or the Law are controlled by those outside those respective callings. In fact, if a proposal were made that clergymen should control lawyers, or lawyers control the profession of medicine, it would be received with general derision. There can, therefore, be no valid reason advanced why the management and control of Nurses should be undertaken by, or should be entrusted to, those who are ignorant of their wants, their wishes, and their work.

The movement which is now in progress, and which has already attained so large a measure of success will, if permitted to develop naturally, lead in due course to the passing of an Act of Parliament, forming a State-controlled Register of Trained Nurses, and those who are enrolled thereon, will form the Nursing Profession of the future; while those who cannot attain to the necessary standard for registration, will remain outside the nursing ranks, as amateurs or untrained. But, at present, when legislation is only prospective, it behoves Nurses for their own protection to remember that it is possible to undo the work already accomplished, to throw their profession back into the position it occupied only ten years ago, and once more to prevent the public from discriminating between trained Nurses and amateurs. And the facts we have advanced show that this will be rendered possible if Nurses permit any unprofessional body to assume the right of publicly stating who is, and therefore by inference, who is not, a trained Nurse. Most specious efforts are being made at present to minimise the evil results of the publication of a list of Nurses chosen by irresponsible people, who understand so little of the subject at issue as to state that in their opinion no definite standard of training is necessary for Nurses to become enrolled upon such a list. The list of Nurses authorised by the Royal Charter of the Royal British Nurses' Association is based on a definite three years' Hospital training. The Nursing Directory only contains the names of those Nurses who have been registered by authority; and we have no hesitation in saying that any Directory conducted by unprofessional people responsible to no one for the names they insert on their list, will once more reproduce the confusion in the public mind which has been largely removed by the action of the Royal British Nurses' Association, and will in a large measure resuscitate the very abuses which Registration is now steadily preventing. The harm which may be wrought by the new Directory is evident to all professional people, but we are willing to believe it is not understood by those who are attempting to carry out the proposed scheme. We hope, for their own sakes, that trained Nurses will abstain from permitting themselves to be labelled, so to speak, by unprofessional people. They will inevitably lose caste in their profession by taking such a step, and they will only have themselves to blame if they find themselves classed by the public with women of most doubtful character, training, and antecedents. Finally, there are special difficulties connected with this system of which we cannot believe that the promoters are aware, but which will undoubtedly lead them some day to regret that they ever attempted such difficult work.

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