

Mr. Henry C. Burdett and the Registration of Nurses.

IT has become necessary that a brief account should once more be given of the connection of Mr. Henry C. Burdett with the Registration of Nurses. The Hospitals' Association was a body formed in 1884, and in its reports Mr. Henry C. Burdett is variously described as the Founder, as one of the Trustees, as the Deputy-Chairman of Council, and as the Chairman of the Executive Committee. It is, indeed, not too much to say that Mr. Henry C. Burdett was the Hospitals' Association. In 1886, Mr. Burdett personally requested certain ladies, who at that time held positions of influence in the Nursing world, to form a Sectional Committee of the Association, for the purpose of considering matters relating to Nursing and Domestic Management in Hospitals. They consented, and in due course considered and framed a set of rules for the Registration of Trained Nurses—a subject in which some of these ladies had taken much interest—making it an essential principle that no Nurse should be registered unless she had passed through three years' Hospital work. Their report on this matter went before the Council of the Hospitals' Association, which altered this foundation principle and decided that one year's Hospital work was sufficient to qualify for registration. When the Sectional Committee met to discuss the matter they came unanimously to the opinion that it would be most dangerous and misleading to the public if women who had only had such brief Hospital experience were formally registered as Trained Nurses. But they were confronted with a printed circular and rules embodying this condition and already printed for distribution by order of the Council of the Association, and in October, 1887, the Association announced that:—

"The rules for the Register of Trained Nurses have been printed, and will be forwarded with form of application to any Nurse sending a stamped and addressed envelope to Mr. Howard J. Collins, Secretary, the Hospitals' Association, Norfolk House, Norfolk Street, W.C.

"(1) A Nurse seeking to be placed on the Register must furnish satisfactory proof that she has worked for at least one year on the staff of a Hospital or Infirmary and that she has been trained in the duties of a Nurse. She must also bring a certificate or testimonial of good moral and general conduct from the Matron or Lady Superintendent of the Hospital or Infirmary in which she has been trained.

"(2) An entrance fee of 2s. 6d., which covers cost of the Association's badge, and an annual subscription of one shilling, will be charged to each Nurse.

"(3) A Nurse will forfeit her badge for intemperance, or other serious misconduct, or neglect of professional duties.

"(4) Nurses making application to be placed on the Register must first communicate with the Secretary by letter addressed to the office of the Hospitals' Association, Norfolk House, Norfolk Street, London, W.C."

Two things, therefore, are quite clear, namely, that it was the Council of the Hospitals' Association which proposed to carry out the details of Registration; and of this Council at that particular time Mr. Henry C. Burdett was the Deputy-Chairman. The views expressed by the Sectional Committee on the vital principle of the term of training having, therefore, been completely disregarded by the Council, the members felt that they could not consent to accept any responsibility for a measure of which they disapproved. They, therefore, met and stated on the Minutes of their Meeting a formal Resolution that having been made responsible for a scheme of Registration of which they did not approve, "namely, the one year's training," they felt called upon to resign their connection with the Association.

The most influential members of the Committee then resigned; the Committee ceased to exist; the British Nurses' Association was formed, and undertook the work of Registration; and after various futile struggles the scheme of the Hospitals' Association collapsed. It would be interesting, by the way, to know what has become of the Hospitals' Association itself, because it never seems to have recovered from this fiasco. For some years past, various efforts have been made to obtain a report of its proceedings or its balance sheet—if it still has any proceedings or balance sheet to show—but these efforts have been unsuccessful. In our issue of February 16th, we commented upon Mr. Burdett's previous connection with the Registration of Nurses, and in relation to our remarks, we have received the following interesting letter:—

3 Crosby Square, E.C.
20th February, 1895.

To the Editor of "*The Nursing Record.*"

MADAM,—We have been consulted by Mr. Burdett with reference to a paragraph in the NURSING RECORD of February 16, page 103, under the head of "Nursing Echoes," and have had access to the minute books of the Hospitals' Association, which contain the records of the matters referred to. There are material errors in the statements in the paragraph in question.

(1) The circular referred to was not issued nor even prepared by or under the superintendence of Mr. Burdett. It was prepared by the Nursing and Domestic Management

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