

Dr. SQUARE, in introducing Miss Wood, spoke of the great advances which had been made in Nurses and Nursing. Some of the Medical men present were old enough to remember the "Gamp" type, but it had died out, and they now had intelligent and well-Trained Nurses, who were in every respect intellectually and morally fitted for their work. Already there were fifteen thousand Trained Nurses in Great Britain, and the number was increasing every day. Miss Wood had come to Plymouth to explain that the Association had been formed for the purpose of uniting the Nurses for mutual help and protection, and of assuring the public by the issue of certificates that the holders of such were qualified for the important duties they had to discharge. It was also intended to apply for a Royal Charter of Incorporation, but the details of the scheme he would leave to Miss Wood to lay before the meeting.

Miss WOOD stated that the Association placed the Registration of Nurses and the obtaining of a Royal Charter in the forefront of its work. By "Registration" they meant something corresponding to the Medical Register, entry in which should be a guarantee to the public, because it would record not only the name of the Nurse, but her place of training and the nature of the certificate she held. The work of obtaining a Royal Charter was a rather slow business, but it was being pushed forward as rapidly as possible. A Charter was not an Act of Parliament, though its action was the same. It would give all who were Registered under it the legal title of "Trained Nurses," and would make it illegal for others to so describe themselves. It would not prevent other people from practising as Nurses, but if the public wished to satisfy themselves whether or not the women they were employing were properly trained it would give them the means of doing so. The Nursing profession was at present in a disorganized state. The work of Nursing was becoming popular; but it was not everybody who was fit to be a Nurse, and it was right, therefore, that some test of physical and mental qualification should be applied to those who professed to do the work. Its popularity had brought many sham Nurses on the *tapis* . Cases were not infrequent of women passing themselves off as "Trained Nurses," whose Hospital experience had been limited to that of a kitchenmaid or charwoman. These people traded on the name of the Hospital in which they had been employed, and at present nobody could say "nay" to them. It brought discredit to the Hospitals, and was cruel all round—in the first place to the poor patients who fell into the hands of these sham Nurses, and in the second place to the Nurses who had spent years in learning their work. Legitimately Trained

Nurses, therefore, should, in their own interest, combine to protect themselves from such unfair competition. That was one of the things the Association was aiming at. They also aimed at securing uniformity in training, and in the standard of competency. At present the various Hospitals had diverse periods and standards of training. The Association had no wish to interfere with the Hospitals, but it was believed that were Registration granted, the natural course of things would be that the Hospitals that were below the Association standard would level up to it. They wanted to define—What is a Nurse? What are her duties? For what period should she be kept in training? What kind of knowledge should she be tested in to entitle her to a certificate? When all that was settled, as it would be settled, when the Royal Charter was obtained, they would know exactly on what footing they stood. The details had yet to be worked out, but the principle was quite decided. The constitution of the British Nurses' Association was strictly professional; it embraced both Medical men and Nurses. At first it was thought the Association should be one for Nurses only; but when the thing came to be worked out, it was found that there were many questions in which the Medical profession ought to have a voice, and many points on which their advice and help were required, and it was seen that the only way to make the organization perfect was to include Medical men as well as Nurses. The Doctors were represented on the Executive Committee and Council in equal numbers with the Nurses, and they had already given the most valuable assistance in developing the scheme. It was hoped that the Medical men and Nurses of the Three Towns would join the Association in large numbers. Already, though the movement had been on foot only a year, they had nearly two thousand six hundred Nurses enrolled; and if they could go to the Privy Council with about four thousand names on their books, they would be able to fairly claim that they represented the opinion of the profession, and then fairly plead that the Charter should be granted. There was to be no Trades Unionism in the matter. They were not going to combine to regulate rates of wages, hours of work, and so on. There would be no interference with the right of contract between the Hospital authorities and the Nurses they engaged. The only thing on which they might possibly dictate would be as to the question of granting certificates. It was the custom in some Hospitals to give no certificates; but when a Nurse had to prove that she had been trained, she would have a right to call upon the Hospital authorities to certify the fact, and nobody could possibly complain of that. (Hear, hear). There

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