

have their names entered therein, as nurses, and whom the Corporation may see fit to enter therein, from time to time, coupled with such information about each person so entered as to the Corporation may from time to time seem desirable." Not one word is contained in the Charter concerning a list of medical men, and it is fair to argue that the addition of medical men to the list vitiates the special purpose for which the power of the Charter was sought and granted.

It must be distinctly understood therefore, that the officers now propose what we have always predicted was their deliberate intention—the relinquishment of the chief work of the Association. We must therefore recall the fact that in 1887 the Royal British Nurses' Association was formed for the object expressed in its first Bye-Law: "To provide for the Registration of Nurses on terms satisfactory to Physicians and Surgeons as evidence of their having received systematic training."

From that date, the Association bent all its energies to the fulfilment of that purpose, and, in 1890, issued the Register of Trained Nurses. Ever since then, it has taken money from nurses, and issued to them Registration Certificates, on the ground that they would be Registered as trained nurses by the Association. At two Mansion House meetings, the present officials and their supporters, amongst whom we would specially mention Sir Dyce Duckworth and Sir James Crichton Browne, sought for public support to the work of the Registration of nurses; and in bold words announced their determination to persevere with the work until it was fully accomplished. The gentlemen we have named are at liberty to eat their words and repudiate their pledges, though we doubt if the public or their profession will honour them more highly for such strength of digestion and weakness of principle. But no one will approve of their disloyal conduct in placing a daughter of the Queen in a most invidious position.

Her Royal Highness Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein pledged her word to the nation, and to the Queen, when applying for the Charter, that the Association, for the benefit both of the public and of the nursing profession, would carry on the work it had inaugurated in the shape of a special list of trained nurses, and largely on the faith of which national work the Royal Charter was granted. Her Royal Highness even went further, for she wrote a Paper which was read in her name before

an international gathering at Buda Pesth in 1893 and in which the following passage occurred:—

"The Nursing Register now bears upon its roll the names of two thousand trained nurses, nearly all of whom have undergone a three-years' training in a recognized Hospital or Hospitals. In addition to applying searching tests to ascertain the efficiency, the personal character, and the general qualifications of all those who apply to be inscribed, the Association exercises the disciplinary power of erasing the names of any who, after Registration, may prove to be unworthy, by reason either of inefficiency or of misconduct . . . . It is the hope of the Corporation that the time is not far distant when the State will see the importance of recognizing a definite Diploma for Nursing, and of giving its official sanction to the maintenance of the Register of Trained Nurses."

It is impossible to pretend that a list of members of the association—medical, as well as nursing—similar to that which any other Society publishes—in any sense or degree fulfils the pledges given by Her Royal Highness. And all loyal subjects of the Crown will regret with us that by the action of a few little known medical men, nonentities, a member of the Royal Family should be placed in such a position towards the public.

For the present, we will only add that the officials of the Association have betrayed the trust confided in them, by thus relinquishing the special and most important national work which the Association undertook to carry out. They realise, we presume, that if they publish no Register, and issue no Registration Certificates, they cannot, without grave personal danger to themselves individually, continue to take money from Nurses on the ground that they are Registering them. And they can hardly believe that many nurses will be so foolish as to pay them in future twenty-one shillings for the doubtful privilege of having their names placed on a list of members of an unpopular and discredited Association. The field therefore is left free for some other body to undertake the work of the Registration of Nurses, and we hope that field will speedily be occupied.

Out of the betrayal of the Association's promises, and the destruction of its past performance, one good at any rate may emerge. The argument for Parliamentary intervention and for the institution of compulsory registration will of course be greatly strengthened by the failure of the Association to carry out the system as a voluntary measure.

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