

have never been able to support the Bill. The two classes of persons who, in our opinion, should be permitted to practise midwifery, are medical practitioners and, within certain defined limits, trained nurses. The General Medical Council has recognized the danger of registering a woman with three months training by seeking to make the provisions of the Bill most penal and restrictive, but it also has failed, as the promoters of the Bill have failed, to recognise that what is needed is to define an adequate curriculum for midwives, and then to allow them a reasonable amount of self-government. For this reason we are glad that the Bill has not become law, as time will now be gained in which to consider the question more fully, and moreover, to obtain the support of the best class of midwives, namely those who are trained nurses, and who do not for the most part support the present Bill, because they conceive it to be founded upon an inadequate basis.

Annotations.

THE COMING STANDARD.

The NURSING RECORD has persistently for the last decade urged the necessity of establishing a definite and recognised standard of nursing education. It is satisfactory therefore to see that, on all sides, the necessity for such a standard is making itself felt. Mr. Thomas Laffan, M.R.C.P.I., M.R.C.S., writing to the *Dublin Nation* draws attention to the difficulty arising from the lack of nursing organisation in Ireland, and points out the need of a Conference to consider the question. This is not the first time that Mr. Laffan, has approached this subject in the press, as in the year 1896, he urged "the appointment of some public committee to thresh out the whole subject, nominate a permanent controlling body draw up a standard curriculum, authenticate the hospitals, take security that the would be teachers teach, and the would be learners learn, institute a proper examination, and regulate the conditions of the nurses' certificates." Again, when the pauper nurse was abolished this same gentleman put on the Agenda Paper of the Workhouse Association the subjoined notice:—"That a committee be appointed, consisting of ladies, laymen, and medical men, to report on the best system of

training for nurses, the share which workhouse hospitals might take in such training, the kind of examination which should wind up such training, and the security which should be taken for the subsequent good conduct of the examinees." It appears therefore that in Ireland, as well as in Great Britain, the need of defining a standard of nursing education is coming to the front, and a conference as suggested by Mr. Laffan would be of great public benefit. It is no doubt the duty of the large nurse training schools to lead the way in this matter, but, in this country at least, the majority of the training schools have repudiated this duty, and have deliberately opposed all efforts to obtain this necessary reform. It becomes therefore a matter for coercion on the part of the public, whose interests are seriously affected by the lack of nursing organization. Sooner or later, the work of defining a minimum curriculum, and of placing duly qualified nurses on a legal basis, must be taken in hand. We think that it is not at all unlikely that the deadlock with regard to poor law nursing, which has been caused to a great extent by the inertia, and the lack of recognition of their public obligations, by the nurse training schools, will be the lever which will bring about the necessary reform. As a preliminary measure, the Conference suggested by Mr. Laffan would no doubt be most useful, both in obtaining a consensus of expert opinion on the subject, and also in educating public feeling. It should be held in a central place, and representation of all the interests involved should be invited. These may be defined as the nurses themselves, the training schools, the medical profession, and the general public. It is of the greatest moment to the public that the education and discipline of nurses should be efficient, because, at the present day, nurses, as never before, are constantly admitted to private houses, and it closely concerns the public, therefore, that they should be able to obtain some guarantee of the trustworthiness, and professional knowledge of the nurses they employ. The meeting in public conference of representatives of the various interests concerned must be beneficial. We hope that the Nursing Conference to be held in London in connection with the International Congress of Women in June next, may afford an opportunity of obtaining, from representative nurses, an international opinion as to what should form an efficient curriculum.

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