

result that the standard of more ambitious colleges was lowered in order to attract students to their doors. In this condition of affairs, it was inevitable that the qualification which could be obtained with the least amount of knowledge and experience—that is to say, with the least expensive education—was ever the most popular; and so the Corporation which gave it became the most flourishing. To follow suit, medical teachers reduced the subjects of medical education, and lowered the necessary number of attendances, and he became the most popular and prosperous lecturer, who could, in the shortest possible time, “cram” into his students just the bare minimum of knowledge requisite to enable them to pass their examinations. The consequence was that there was no incentive to proficiency on the part of the students, and no inducement to teach wisely and widely on the part of the teachers. Medical education remained more or less of a farce, and on the same low level which it had occupied for a hundred years before. The passing of the Medical Act, it must always be remembered, altered all this, as if by magic. A General Medical Council was appointed, composed of representatives of every licensing Corporation in the United Kingdom. Every medical man had to be registered under the authority of the Council; and without such Registration he was unable to hold public appointments or to claim professional fees. Then the General Medical Council was directed to lay down a general basis of education without which qualifications could not be gained; in other words, without which no medical man could be registered; and, as a natural result, the Council was able thenceforth to refuse to recognise the qualification granted by any College or University which did not conform to the standard thus defined. The result was that, at once, every Corporation began to compete with every other to demand the highest, rather than the lowest, standard of education and examination. Teachers were spurred on to continually fresh endeavours, and students became infected with the same rivalry. In consequence, not only was the whole level of education raised, but, on the one hand, teachers also studied their subjects as they had never done before; so that one great discovery followed another, until the whole science and art of Medicine and Surgery advanced by leaps and bounds. And, on the other hand, the increased public esteem in which the medical profession came to be held, and the increased

expense of medical education, brought into the profession students of much higher social position than had ever entered the ranks of the calling before. This advance, then, which must inevitably continue to increase in the future, dates from the State recognition and organization of medical education.

We have given this retrospect because it emphasises the importance of the new departure about to be made in Nursing education in Yorkshire. The various Yorkshire Unions last January sent representatives to a conference at Leeds, which after careful discussion passed the following important Resolution: “That it is desirable to have a general uniform standard of training and examination for workhouse nurses in the County of York.” A Committee of a very representative character was appointed to consider the best methods of carrying this resolution into effect. This Committee has now reported its conclusions, to which we refer in another column. Of these, the chief was that in order to obtain a uniform system of training throughout Yorkshire a supervising training committee should be appointed, consisting of five Lady Superintendent Nurses; and that this supervising committee should have charge of the examination of all probationers in their practical nursing work; for which purpose two members in turn should visit the various workhouse infirmaries, and examine probationers; being empowered to sign, or to decline to sign, a Standard Certificate.

With regard to the nurses' qualifications in theoretical subjects, the Yorkshire College at Leeds was approached, and requested to hold through their medical department periodical examinations of nurses in these matters, and to grant certificates to successful candidates. The Yorkshire College expressed its sympathy in the matter, but very wisely declined to make itself responsible for any opinion concerning the practical skill of the nurses. Finally it was decided that a Nursing Board should be formed for Yorkshire, consisting of one representative from each poor law union, with power to co-opt five medical officers and five lady superintendents, and one or more representatives of the Yorkshire College. We shall watch the progress of this movement with the greatest interest, but are glad to note and emphasize the far-sighted wisdom with which it has been inaugurated, and the broad-minded attitude assumed by the medical profession in Yorkshire upon the matter.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)