

Regents' Board will make a selection from among them of women who will form the central authority, and take charge of the business of registration, define what the minimum training must be, and raise nursing to a proper footing. Considering what enormous advances have been made in medical, surgical, and obstetrical nursing during the last twenty-five years, it is of the utmost importance that nurses should be so organised as to enable the patient to realise their value. Only think what advances have been made in the education of boys and girls by the institution of the University Local Examinations! It was quite extraordinary what that did in making the smaller schools understand what they ought to work up to, and I can conceive nothing better qualified to raise the standard in nursing than having a central authority. At the present moment every one of our large hospitals is a law to itself; one is good and another is bad.

AFFILIATION OF HOSPITALS.

Another thing which would be of advantage to the public and to nursing education would be the affiliation of groups of hospitals. Why should it be necessary for the nurse to receive the whole of her training in one institution? A medical student is required by the General Medical Council to prove his knowledge of medicine, surgery, and obstetrics before his name can be placed on the Medical Register. A nurse should be able to give evidence of nursing knowledge in these branches, but in many general hospitals experience in maternity nursing is not obtainable; nor is that in fever nursing. Till these points are attended to the health of the country will not be what it should be. The harm occasioned by the ignorant nursing of maternity cases is untold. The community must have a good start in infancy if it is to benefit later by physical training. We need the help of the State in the full development of nursing and nursing matters, and in the care of the health of the working classes. It has been said that you will never get qualified nurses to spend their lives in country districts. Perhaps not; but I am perfectly certain that there is sufficient devotion in the world to ensure a large number of fully-trained nurses—I do not believe in half-training—being willing to spend a certain portion of their lives in rural districts if they are well paid by the State. As I have already said even the health of the community depends to some extent upon the State Registration of Trained Nurses, and on their employment by the State, and under County Councils.

We have only time to allude very briefly this week to the papers presented touching on various aspects of the Registration question. The first was read by Miss Isla Stewart, Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital and President of the Matrons' Council, on:—

REGISTRATION AS IT AFFECTS GENERAL HOSPITALS.

The chief points brought forward in this paper were that the only cure for the present diversity of standards in connection with nursing education was Legal Registration, with the natural sequence of the restriction of the term trained nurse to women who have spent a definite time in the wards of a hospital and after a defined course of study have passed an examination conducted by a legally-appointed Examining Board.

The broad results of Registration would probably be increase in theoretical instruction, shorter hours in the wards, a more strenuous life all round for the probationer, a decrease in the payments of probationers, perhaps the institution of a general premium, and an increase in the pay of the fully-trained nurse.

In conclusion, Miss Stewart said:—"With Registration will not dawn the day of perfection. It is merely a step, a big step, in the way to that most illusive and impossible of conditions. It won't make us all good, it won't even make us all nurses; but it will help the best and exclude the worst, and what can one ask more?"

REGISTRATION AS IT AFFECTS POOR LAW INFIRMARIES.

Miss Barton, Matron of the Chelsea Infirmary, said that Poor Law nursing had of recent years improved so greatly that when State Registration was established, as sooner or later it surely would be, the Poor Law nurse, coming from one of the excellent training-schools, would completely satisfy the most exacting of Registration Boards.

Registration would benefit nurses trained in Poor Law Infirmarys, for "then the trained and disciplined nurses of our Metropolitan Infirmarys, who have as yet hardly been recognised and appreciated as they ought to be, will form a large and valuable addition to the nurses of Great Britain recognised by the State."

REGISTRATION AS IT AFFECTS SPECIAL HOSPITALS.

Mrs. Matthews, late Matron of the Grove Fever Hospital, Tooting, commented on the varying value of special hospitals as training-schools. She thought that special hospitals having not less than fifty beds, and giving systematic instruction under trained supervision, should at least be recognised as partial training-schools for nurses, and training received in them be taken into account by the General Nursing Council when it draws up its curriculum.

She thought there should be a system of affiliation between general and special hospitals for educational purposes. It was the proper solution of the problem.

REGISTRATION AS IT AFFECTS THE GRADUATE NURSE.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick said she supposed it would be admitted in relation to the Registration of Nurses that the nurse herself was the principal factor. Nurses were admittedly an unselfish com-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)