

MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS.

To *Medical Practitioners*, because there is no central authority in nursing, analogous to the General Medical Council, which defines the professional curriculum for nurses, or which is empowered to enforce the reasonable control and discipline of trained nurses.

THE PUBLIC.

To *the Public*, because it is of supreme importance to them in cases of illness that their nurses should be competent and trustworthy. At present, unfortunately, the private nursing world is more largely exploited by untrained and unsuitable persons than any other branch of nursing work, and the public pay the fees commanded by trained and experienced nurses for the services of women who are neither one nor the other. When it is realised that between the visits of the medical attendant the nurse is left in sole charge, and that the comfort and even the safety of a patient often depends upon her care and devotion, it will be seen that the stake which the public has in the question of State Registration cannot be exaggerated.

The principal events in the Registration movement are:—

1887. The British Nurses' Association founded with the object of instituting a system of Registration for nurses analogous to that enforced by law in the case of the medical profession.
1889. At its November Session, the General Medical Council (the governing body of the medical profession) passed the following resolution—
"That in the opinion, of the Council it would be much to the advantage of the public, and particularly would be of much convenience to the practitioners of medicine and surgery, that facilities, usable under proper guarantees in all parts of the United Kingdom, should be given, by Act of Parliament or otherwise, for the authoritative certification of competent trained nurses, who, when certified, should be subject to common rules of discipline."
1891. The first Register of Trained Nurses was issued by the R.B.N. Association.
1891. Registration of Trained Nurses enforced in Cape Colony under the Medical and Pharmacy Act, Cape of Good Hope, promulgated August 21st, 1891.
1894. Foundation of the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, the second object of this Society being "To bring about a uniform system of education, examination, certification, and State Registration for Nurses in British Hospitals."
1895. The British Medical Association, at its Annual Meeting held in London in July, 1895, on the motion of Dr. Bedford Fenwick, unanimously resolved—
"That in the opinion of this meeting it is expedient that an Act of Parliament should, as soon as possible, be passed providing for the registration of medical, surgical, and obstetric nurses, and the Council of this Association are therefore requested to consider the matter and to take such measures as may seem to them advisable to obtain such legislation."
1896. Conference convened between the Parliamentary Bills Committee of the British Medical Association and representatives of bodies connected with the organisation and welfare of nurses to consider this resolution prior to taking action. At this Conference the delegate of the Executive Committee of the Royal British Nurses' Association and its Medical Honorary Secretary voted for a resolution—"That a legal system of Registration of Nurses is inexpedient *in principle*, and injurious to the best interests of nurses and of doubtful public benefit."
- This resolution against the principle of Registration was carried by *sic* votes against *nine*, that is to say, by the vote of the representative of the Royal British Nurses' Association. And this vote was subsequently upheld by the majority of the Executive Committee of that Association, although strongly protested against by the minority.
1899. The Register of Trained Nurses published by the R.B.N.A. abolished, and a Roll of Members substituted.
1899. Registration of Trained Nurses enforced by Act of Parliament in Natal.
1899. Foundation of the Australasian Trained Nurses' Association, one object being "To establish a system of Registration for Trained Nurses."
1901. At the International Congress of Nurses held at Buffalo, U.S.A., the following resolution in favour of State Registration was moved from the Chair by the President of the Congress, Miss Isabel McIsaac, seconded by Miss Isla Stewart (Great Britain), supported by Miss Snively (Canada), Miss McGahey (Australia), Mrs. Hampton Robb (United States), and accorded a rising vote:—
"Whereas, The nursing of the sick is a matter closely affecting all classes of the community in every land;
"Whereas, To be efficient workers, nurses should be carefully educated in the important duties which are now allotted to them;
"Whereas, At the present time there is no generally accepted term or standard of training, nor system of education, nor examination for nurses in any country;

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)