

would very soon be recognised that Registration meant nothing but the fact of training for three years, but it would have a great effect on the nurses themselves. It was an injustice that at the present time any woman should be allowed to don a uniform and go about as a trained nurse. It was unjust to those who had been through a long training that they should be handicapped by inexperienced persons. Registration merely meant that a medical man could get a nurse who was registered. Of course, if a medical man had a patient who did not require an experienced nurse, it was quite possible to get some woman who had had some training. He thought it would be a great injustice to nurses not to have this question of Registration settled. A Select Committee was now sitting, and it seemed to him that it would be a good opportunity to send from the Representative Meeting some expression of opinion to the Committee to guide it in its deliberations. He thought that Registration would be a very good thing both for the nurses, for the medical profession, and for patients.

Dr. Nash (Blackburn, &c., Divisions) said that in the North there were many nurses whose training was totally inadequate. They had some sort of training and were then, let loose on the public to earn money for the institutions to which they belonged. They went forth to the world with the same hall-mark as those who had had proper training in hospitals.

The motion,

"That this meeting approves of the principle of the Registration of nurses,"

was then carried by a large majority.

The Chairman said that now the meeting had settled the question as far as the principle went, he might express the opinion that had been so well expressed by Dr. Sevestre. It seemed to him that, considering they as a profession maintained the necessity of Registration for the express purpose of protecting their professional knowledge, it would have been a very grave injustice to any body of people who were similarly seeking the protection of their profession to have decided otherwise.

It was then proposed, seconded, and agreed that the resolution just passed should be transmitted to the Select Committee of the House of Commons which was now sitting.

This debate and its result is most important and encouraging. It proves that this great and representative meeting of medical practitioners from all parts of the kingdom endorsed the principle of Registration for nurses, thus re-affirming their resolution passed in London in 1895. We are informed that no one who was present could doubt the strong feeling on the question, nor that the voting was so uniform as to be practically unanimous in favour of Registration.

The Registration Situation in England.

It is exceedingly difficult, says the *National Hospital Record*, for the average citizen of the United States or Canada, be he a professional or lay member of society, to quite grasp the situation as regards Nurse Registration in England. For that reason it is well to reserve judgment, if judgment implies condemnation, because we do not know, and cannot know, all the facts. But refraining from judgment need not necessarily blur moral distinctions or perceptions. The situation is certainly one that would lead those interested in (what every American is supposed to believe in and work for) progress to pause to question why? Why this antagonism on the part of hospital directors to nursing legislation? To find a body of men issuing a manifesto over their signatures protesting against the obtaining of a legal status for nurses is something that seems out of keeping with the spirit of the twentieth century. To find women—some of them nurses—operating with these men, who represent the Central Hospital Council for London, is something still more difficult to understand. And the reasons given for such an action seem so puerile, so unworthy the spirit of British liberty and fair play, and progress. If it had occurred in Russia or some other of the less enlightened, less progressive, European countries, it would not be so surprising. But to find in England a party attempting to crush out in woman the aspirations for a higher and a better order of things, trying to make women contented with less than the highest opportunity for development—well, it is simply inexplicable. The reasons given in the manifesto, which we wish space would allow us to quote in full, show a complete failure to comprehend the real objects for which legislation is desired. They are in fact excuses, not reasons, and force one to the conviction that underneath the manifesto there is some reason for opposing legislation—a reason that would not bear the light of day and must needs be hidden underneath a cloak of excuses.

But, then, England has done several things of late that cause other nations to stop and question why this backward step. The Education Act, that placed British schools again under ecclesiastical control, was another step that set all the world to wondering. While France has been putting forth tremendous efforts to establish a school system free from ecclesiasticism, England's lawmakers, in the face of popular opinion, have precipitated a struggle, that reaches throughout its borders and of which the end is not yet. That the lawmakers have not voiced the sentiment of the British people has been thoroughly demonstrated. To find under the British flag in South Africa a legal condition re-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)