

Progress of State Registration.

Miss A. M. Edwards, Lady Superintendent of the York County Hospital, will represent the Society for State Registration of Trained Nurses—in the absence of the President—at the forthcoming meeting of the National Council of Women of Great Britain and Ireland, which meets at York on November 9th and 10th.

Miss Isla Stewart has been invited to speak at Leicester on State Registration, and will do so next month.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick will visit Nottingham on November 15th and address meetings of nurses and others on State Registration and International Affiliation.

"MATERIAL INTERESTS."

The *British Medical Journal* says:—We have received for publication from the Honorary Secretary of the Altrincham Division of the Lancashire and Cheshire Branch the following resolution, passed at a meeting of the Division held on September 29th:—

That the members of the Altrincham Division, assembled in quarterly meeting, having considered the subject fully, after due notice given, desire to record their great regret that the Representative Meeting at Oxford expressed approval of the principle of State Registration of Nurses.

They have all experienced in the past the effects of the competition of unqualified persons; and particularly of so-called "nurses," who now attend, without supervision, many minor cases, both medical and surgical, to the direct pecuniary disadvantage of the medical profession. They are convinced that no Registration Act can, or will, prevent such unqualified practice (which, in their opinion, is also detrimental to the best interests of the public), and they foresee that it would, on the contrary, directly increase it, by enabling such nurses to advertise themselves as "registered," which, to the unthinking public, would be as good as a medical diploma.

They feel that it is one of the chief duties of the Association to protect the material interests of its members, and they respectfully request the Council to receive and consider their most earnest and emphatic protest against official approval being given to any Bill for the registration of persons, many of whom will, with absolute certainty, use such registration as a cloak for unqualified practice.

SHOULD THE MEDICAL PROFESSION ENCOURAGE THE STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSES?

Dr. Francis Schill, of Johnstown, Pa., in addressing the Cambria County Medical Association, at Johnstown, U.S.A., discussed this important question as follows:—

Before answering this question it may be well to look at the subject from several points of view. Hence I have divided it into three divisions:—I. What it will do for the nurses. II. What it will do for the public. III. What it will do for the pro-

fession. I think I can demonstrate that what it will do for the first two it will also do for us.

I. WHAT IT WILL DO FOR THE NURSES.

It will afford nurses that mutual help which only comes from association with one another at meetings and from reading journals devoted to their calling. Getting acquainted with the best nurses in the profession, as well as with their work, will beget a desire to emulate their example. This can only result in good. Those who forge ahead will unconsciously establish a standard and beget a competition that cannot be but helpful to those below if there is the right stuff in them, or else compel their elimination from the field. Registration, by compelling examinations, will establish a certain standard; and we know from experience that the tendency is constantly to raise the standard. There will be established preliminary examinations to determine their fitness for the study of nursing, which will exclude many who are good enough nurses *per se*, but deficient in general knowledge. This is in keeping with the spirit of the times in other professions—that none but the best shall practise—and establishes a desirable aristocracy of intellect. Furthermore, State regulation will establish certain other examinations, independent of those of the training school, to determine their fitness to practise nursing after they have studied it. Thus gradually the title "R. N." or "T. N." will come to stand for a certain definite standard. At present there is no desire to prevent anyone from nursing, only the public should know exactly what these outsiders represent. Raising the standard of requirements will further weed out the unfit and prevent overcrowding, with its attendant deterioration of wages and unscrupulousness in service and conduct.

II. WHAT IT WILL DO FOR THE PUBLIC.

The public is seldom able to judge of the merits of a nurse until after a trial, and often not then. This trial may be fatal to the nurse in question, but the family may be again fleeced by the very next nurse it gets. And should this costly experience be too often met with, it will beget a contempt for all nursing, which is good neither for the public nor the physician and the nurse. Miss Constance V. Curtis tells of a woman who posed as a nurse and undertook the management of a case of enteric fever. The patient was very ill. She gave no baths, ice, milk, or water. He had a severe bed-fever. She allowed no visitors to see him and thus hear his story of neglect. She told visitors that the doctor forbade it. If he complained to his physician, she told the doctor that his patient was delirious. Had she been a registered nurse she would not have been so ignorant, or, at least, there would have been a remedy at law for her imposition. To the public, registration and licensing will come to mean a certain standard, as the word "sterling" does for silver.

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