

qualified persons"; that there was no desire to prevent the public employing any women they chose to act as their nurses; but only that when the sick demanded and paid for trained nurses they should have some guarantee that they were obtaining what they wanted, whereas, at present, in most cases they had no such guarantee at all. Also, that there was no question of excluding the large numbers of women who, although not trained, were now engaged in working as nurses; that Parliament had always insisted in similar legislation that justice should be done to all who are *bona fide* engaged in the work when new legislation was passed, providing that for a certain specified "period of grace" such persons, if of good character, should be duly registered; and it might be taken for granted that the same principle would be adopted in this case, as indeed was provided for in [Clause 15, section 2] the Bill introduced by Dr. Farquharson, a measure which he considered was the better and more practicable of the two Bills introduced this Session into Parliament. With regard to the financial aspects of the question, Dr. Fenwick estimated that each nurse would be required to pay two guineas for her registration, and that this would be amply sufficient to cover all the expenses of the Council. He promised to bring before the Committee certain financial estimates which he had drawn up with regard to the matter. As to examinations, he considered that it was an essential reform that the General Nursing Council established by Parliament should be empowered to appoint examiners and grant a State certificate in Nursing. He had devoted considerable attention to this point, and was convinced that it would prove impossible for the Nursing Council to accept the certificates of the different hospitals as sufficient qualifications for Registration. He reminded the Committee that no University would for a moment permit any college tutor to examine his own pupils, and of his own initiative grant to them the degrees of the University; and that no medical school, however eminent its professors were, was able to examine its own students and grant to them a medical qualification, but that every student had to present himself before some University or Medical Corporation established by Parliament or by Royal Charter in order to obtain the necessary qualifications to practise his profession. So, in like manner, he argued that, in justice to the public and to nurses themselves, it was necessary that nursing examinations should be held by an entirely independent body such as the General Nursing Council.

He placed before the Committee a letter sent from the British Nurses' Association to every hospital in the United Kingdom in 1889, calling attention to the urgent need which even then existed for nursing reforms, and asking the hospitals to unite in forming a Council empowered to carry out educational reforms and the registration of trained nurses. The hospitals, with very few exceptions, declined to take any steps in the matter, on the ground that such work was outside their province. This step was taken fifteen years ago, because the reform party were most anxious to have improvements made within the nursing world itself, and without calling public attention to the scandals which existed. Unfortunately, that ideal had proved impossible, and now there was nothing to be done except by Parliamentary enactment.

Dr. Fenwick also pointed out the conclusive ex-

pressions of opinion which the medical profession had given upon this matter; that the General Medical Council had, in 1889, unanimously passed a resolution that it would be much to the advantage of the public, and of much convenience to medical men, that facilities 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. Also, that a general meeting of the British Medical Association in 1895 unanimously passed a resolution he had proposed, that it was expedient that an Act of Parliament should as soon as possible be passed providing for the registration and education of medical, surgical, and obstetric nurses.

In reply to further questions, Dr. Fenwick emphasised the necessity for every nurse to be trained in both medical and surgical nursing, and he hoped some day they would also be trained in obstetrical work; and that when they had obtained their general training, so as to qualify them to attend efficiently upon any patient they might be sent to, it would be possible for any nurse to devote herself specially, if she chose to do so, to some particular branch of her work, whether that was medical or surgical, or whether she desired to take up such a surgical speciality as the nursing of abdominal operations or of gynaecological or of eye cases. He gave apt illustrations to prove the need of every nurse knowing her general work.

With regard to an objection which had been raised by the opponents to Registration, on which Dr. Fenwick was questioned, he replied that he quite agreed it was impossible to examine or register a nurse's personal qualities; but that, in his opinion, the nurse's knowledge and experience of her work were quite as, if not more, important to her patient and to the medical practitioner than her amiability of character, tact, and unselfishness could possibly be. He illustrated this by the case of a nurse who possessed most charming manners, but was so sympathetic with the hunger from which her patient, recovering from typhoid, suffered that on her own responsibility and amiability she gave him a mutton chop, with the result that the patient died. (Probably the Committee felt that the nurse's charming manners scarcely compensated the bereaved friends for the patient's death.) With regard to the number of nurses at present at work, Dr. Fenwick pointed out the difficulty of obtaining accurate information on this matter, even from the last Census returns; but these showed a total of at least 80,000 women and about 1,250 men apparently engaged as nurses in the United Kingdom. He pointed out, however, several fallacies in these figures, and expressed his conviction, from a careful examination of them and of other points, that at least 40,000 women were at present practising as nurses who had not received any adequate training for the responsible duties they undertook to perform.

After a sitting of two hours, in which the whole Committee showed themselves to be much interested, it was decided to adjourn the rest of Dr. Fenwick's evidence to a later date. On Tuesday, the 12th inst., the Committee held their third meeting and took evidence from Miss Isla Stewart, Matron of St. Bartholomew's, and Miss Margaret Huxley, of Dublin, which we hope to give in some detail in our next issue.

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