

small, London or provincial, has its own standard, and that depends entirely on the standard of the Matron. If she has a high ideal of the training of her nurses, they leave the hospital as well trained as its scope admits; but if her standard be low, the value of the nurse's leaving certificate will not be great. The public ought to have the safeguard of knowing that when a nurse holds a certificate, it means that she has undergone a three years' thorough and complete training, and has passed an examination.

"Also, power should be given by Government to remove from the Register the name of any nurse who disgraced herself. There are black sheep in every profession, and there should be means of dealing with them. If the nursing profession were organised, and Government empowered an independent body to register and enforce a minimum standard of training, a great boon would be achieved.

"Opponents of Registration say that since there are large numbers of useful nurses who are not highly trained, this would be very hard on them. The scheme would not, however, interfere with them; there would still be work for them, since it is not every case which requires the most skilled nursing; but it would differentiate the untrained from the trained nurses, which is very necessary."

Miss Amy Hughes was then called upon, and said:—

"I think that all those who have studied the needs of the nursing profession are fully convinced of the very great need that exists for definite organisation. We have long since passed the stage when people think that nurses are angels; we know them to be human beings with—as nurses—grave responsibilities placed upon them. It is very important that nurses should realise their responsibilities, and the fact that the issues of life and death are often in their hands. The Registration of nurses is no now question; discussion on it has been going on for many years, but lately there has been a revival of strong feeling on the subject, and everyone alike feels it imperative that something should be done, though those who are opposed to Registration have no alternative scheme to propose.

"If a man or woman claims to have learnt a trade, we demand that they shall show proofs of their efficiency. Why should not this be so with nurses? Solicitors and doctors have their registers, in order that those whose names appear there may be known to possess a technical knowledge of their work. Again, why should this not be so with nurses? It is because nurses and the public do not recognise the importance of this. They, as well as the doctors, are misled by certificates. But who is to say what is the value of a certificate shown by a nurse? Certificates are given at the end of a varying period of training, by big and little hospitals alike. Every hospital is a law to itself. If the Matron has a high ideal of training, she will give her nurses the best training that the size of the hospital admits of, but if she uses her nurses simply for the efficient working of the hospital, their training will probably be more limited or less thorough; they get

certificates at the end of their time, and take up private nursing, which may include cases entirely outside their experience, with terrible results. Certificates often convey very little and give a false idea of a nurse's knowledge, and they do not give the right impression to nurses, to medical men, or to the public. It must be said that at the present time nurses are not receiving a thorough all-round training; they are often kept in one ward for an abnormal time during their time in the hospital. In justice to the hospitals, it must also be said that the system of training is comparatively new, for Miss Nightingale only laid down its principles in 1860. The hospitals have not yet grasped the best way of training a good all-round nurse. Each one trains in its own ringed fence, and, of course, each is bound to do the best not only for its own patients, but also to consider its subscribers' views, for on that depends its local support, since our hospitals are not State supported, as is the case in America and Australia.

"Once a nurse has got a certificate, nothing can take it from her. I know a case of a nurse who is in prison, and when she has finished her sentence, she cannot be prevented from getting fresh work by means of the certificate which has served her before. We want some power to help us to deal with such cases, for the fact must be faced that there are black sheep in the nursing profession, as in any other. We want an outside independent central body which would hold an examination—not necessarily of a high standard or very stiff—and when it was proved that a nurse knew her business she would be registered, which would at once protect her from outsiders. One great objection put forward by those who oppose Registration is that it would not be possible to remove a nurse's name from the register. As a matter of fact, now that by Act of Parliament the name of any offending midwife can be removed from the register, so it will be possible to obtain the same power in the case of nurses. Another great objection put forward is this, that it will not make good women; but we contend that Registration will make a good woman a better nurse, and also that it will make those who select nurses more careful. The sense of responsibility should rest most heavily on all those who train and give certificates, and they must awaken to that responsibility.

"It has been said that nurses trained in London are necessarily superior to those who are trained in the provinces. This I deny emphatically; they can be trained quite as well, and sometimes better, in a large provincial hospital as in a metropolitan hospital. It would be impossible for all nurses to be trained in London hospitals; there would never be enough vacancies, and therefore it is hardly fair that because a nurse has been trained in the country she should be branded as inferior.

"Two suggestions have been made to take the place of the Registration of nurses; firstly, to register nursing homes; and secondly, that a nurse's certificate should give a detailed record of her work and conduct during her training. Neither of these suggestions, however, really meet the case. What we want is improvement in the status of the nurse, and the only sure way to achieve that end is by establishing an independent body who will deal with the examination of nurses, the placing of their names subsequently on a register, and also will be authorised to exercise certain disciplinary powers when necessary."

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