

Miss Mollett said :—

"Speaking after Miss Hughes, I feel convinced that it is absolutely unnecessary for me to explain to you the fundamental principles of State Registration for Nurses. If you do not understand them now, I am afraid my explanations will make them no clearer, so that I shall confine what I have to say to giving you my own views on the subject, and as I have held those views practically unaltered for over seventeen years, I speak to you with very firm conviction—a conviction which has stood the test of time.

"Many of you have no doubt heard of the Royal British Nurses' Association, but I expect very few of you know that I was one of the three original initiators of the movement which led to the founding of that Association—in fact, the invitations for the first meeting were drawn up at my infirmary (I was then Matron of the Chelsea Infirmary), and the reasons I had then for desiring to see some means introduced for professionally controlling the large and ever-increasing body of nurses in England I hold to be as valid now as they were then. There was then, as there is now, a large floating population of nurses, genuine and make-believe, the fully trained, the half-trained, the wholly untrained, all jostling and competing together, all without any professional control, all, in the eyes of the public, on the same plane of proficiency or incompetency. And it seemed to us then, as it seems to us now, that the one thing to be done to reduce chaos to order was to have some standard by which to measure the term 'nurse,' something to which it could definitely apply.

"Of the failure of that Association, even when backed by a Royal Charter and headed by a Royal President, to gain any real hold over the nursing profession as a whole, and to establish an efficient *voluntary* system of Registration, I need not speak, it is a matter of history. Precisely those who are most in need of some kind of control are likely to be the very last to voluntarily place themselves under it.

"It is here that the root of the mischief lies. Undoubted harm is, of course, done to the nursing profession by untrained women who pose as trained nurses, and, in common justice, some method should exist for discriminating between the trained and the untrained; still greater harm is done by the absence of all means of controlling nurses as a body. Their certificate once gained, their testimonials procured, they are independent of that very real check and curb which is common to the members of all other professional callings—a check that does not depend solely on their wage-earning capacity. Some people say that when a nurse is registered she will 'think too much of herself.' I want the nurse to think a lot of herself. The nurse, as a nurse, cannot have too high an opinion of her calling and its responsibilities. The higher she rates it, the prouder she is of it, the harder she will strive to do her part to be a credit to it and to do it honour. I hope and trust all registered nurses will have the very highest regard and esteem for themselves as members of one of the most honourable and most ancient callings open to women.

"Then some people say, 'Oh, nurses will begin to know too much.' That is nonsense. You may know the wrong things, but you can never know too much. Ignorance and a slipshod education may be attractive to people of indolent minds, but they can never be useful. Neither can nursing ever be learnt by cramming. (I came across a delightful American advertise-

ment the other day, offering to turn you into a certificated trained nurse by correspondence.) Now nursing consists of a systematic training of a woman's faculties, bodily and mental, for one purpose, and when she is so trained you want to test her and hall mark her.

"I sympathise deeply with those opponents of Registration who hold that the best nursing is more a matter of temperament and character than of knowledge and learning. So is the best of everything. The spiritual leader of souls is the outcome of a highly-strung organisation, of which there are none too many, but a very excellent parish clergyman is trained out of very much more ordinary material. There will always be the scientific genius who revolutionises the medical world of his age, but there will also be the good general practitioner, formed by training out of an average young man. The world is the better for those who give them higher ideals, broader fields of knowledge, but all bursts of exalted feeling must be followed by a substitution if the cause is to live, of steady duty and a practical adaptation of ideals to facts.

"I sympathise with those who think it hard to talk of the organisation of the nursing profession—to turn a calling connected with some of our most ideal legends, and that runs like a golden thread of humanity through the past ages, over to a matter-of-fact Registration Board. Sentiment, the best sentiment, plays a large part in the opposition to the scheme for placing nurses, their education, and their legal status on a sound basis.

"With all those who hesitate before voting for Registration because they fear that it may alter the humane and sympathetic attitude with which a nurse approaches her work, I sympathise, as I have said, deeply and thoroughly. But there is one class of opponents for whom I have not one grain of sympathy—not one iota; it is those who say keep a nurse ignorant, keep a nurse wholly dependent, and she will be easier to manage. It is the old cry that has been proved false again and again, let the employed be ignorant, and he or she will be more obedient and pliable. There are no servants so terrible as stupidity and ignorance. And here I wish to refute one of the weakest arguments I have ever heard against Registration—that is, that it will create, or that some of us desire to create, what will be virtually an inferior order of medical women, instead of a body of nurses. I have never heard of any advocate of Registration who wished anything so foolish. Our sole aim, our sole object is to supply the public and the medical profession with good reliable nurses, and, rightly or wrongly, we believe Registration will be a right step in that direction. The main idea of Registration is so simple—a central body with power to regulate the training and certification of nurses, to protect the name of registered nurses from impostors, and to control trained nurses professionally after registration—that it is difficult to understand why it is objected to.

"What we also look to the Registration Bill to do is to define the training of a nurse, so that it will be possible to utilise all the vast material for training nurses which is now only used in a very wasteful and disjointed manner; all the special hospitals, the small hospitals, the fever hospitals—for we are training nurses, not medical men—and a hospital with a medical school attached is far from being necessary in the training of a nurse. Even the opponents of Registration agree that the present condition of affairs is unsatisfactory, but they offer no suggestions

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