

Progress of State Registration.

LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE FOR QUEEN'S NURSES.

The following letter appeared in the *Morning Post* on Friday last:—

"SIR,—In reference to the report in your issue of the 16th inst. of a meeting held by the Kensington branch of the Women's Liberal Unionist Association upon the State Registration of Nurses, it is thought right that I should point out to you that there is no authority for a statement that is reported to have been made by Mr. Sydney Holland that 'the Queen's Jubilee Nurses would not register.' The subject of the registration of nurses is one upon which there is considerable difference of opinion on the Council of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses, and therefore no pronouncement on the subject has been made. The Queen's Nurses would be left perfectly free to exercise their own judgment.

"Yours, &c.,

"ARTHUR L. B. PEILE,

"Master of St. Katharine's,

"President."

Thus it is made perfectly plain to the Queen's Nurses that liberty of conscience is theirs, and that the Council of the Institute, composed almost entirely of lay and medical persons, feel rightly that any coercion of the nurses they employ on this professional question would be inexcusable. Would that the London Hospital Committee would adopt the same just attitude towards their nursing staff. It is high time. The truth is, that numbers of London-trained nurses are in favour of the organisation of their profession by the State. But, naturally, as such opinions are held to be highly heretical by the Matron and Chairman, the public are led to believe that these nurses are solid obstructionists and "would refuse to register."

This is nonsense. If freedom of action were permitted them, London Hospital nurses would prove to be as intelligent as their colleagues in hospitals, at home and abroad, where State Registration is advocated as the best means of evolving a standard of nursing education and sound discipline.

On Thursday in last week, Mrs. Strong, Matron of the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, received the Matrons of the local hospitals, who were well represented, and those interested in the nursing profession, to a delightful tea and then gave an address on State Registration of Nurses, concerning which she invited discussion. Mrs. Strong, in her opening remarks, stated that in no wise had her views on the matter of Registration by the State altered. Ten years ago she read

a paper (at the invitation of the Matrons' Council) in London, on "A Plea for Uniformity of Education in Nursing," from which she gave extracts, urging the necessity for a higher and more uniform standard of training for nurses. She went on to say that the form of registration now in vogue was worse than useless, owing to the fact that nurses could now be registered who had not received the three years' training in a general hospital which was certainly desirable if efficiency was to be obtained.

Mrs. Strong said she had also written a Paper for the Buffalo International Nurses' Congress in 1901. But, unfortunately, illness prevented her being present herself on that occasion. Here again she had urged upon the nursing profession the necessity for Registration of Nurses by the State.

At the conclusion of a most interesting address, and after a few questions had been asked and answered, a unanimous vote of support was accorded to Mrs. Strong by those present, amongst whom were Lady Chisholm and Mrs. Napier, Lady Managers, Miss Shannon, Western Infirmary; Miss Macfarlane, Victoria Infirmary; Miss Kinnear-Adams, Ruchill Hospital; Miss Wright, Stobhill Hospital; Miss Moseley, Western District Hospital; Miss Marchant, Eastern District Hospital; Miss Grant, Elder Hospital, Govan; Miss Landles, Knightswood Hospital; Miss Whitecross, Broomhill Incurable Hospital; Miss Torrance, Cancer Hospital; Miss Husband, Maternity Hospital; Miss Scott, Schaw Home; Miss Berwick, Sick Poor and Private Nursing Assoc.; Miss Wilson, Lock Hospital; Miss Wright, Private Hospital for Women; Miss McEachran, Woodside Nursing Home; Miss Waddington; Miss Aitchinson, Sandyford Home; Miss Brown, Regent Home; Miss Melrose, Assistant Matron, and the Lady Superintendents of the various Departments of the Royal Infirmary.

Apologies for absence were sent by Miss Alexander, Paisley Infirmary; Miss Simpson, Sick Children's Hospital; Miss Chalmers, Eye Infirmary; Miss Tisdall, Queen's Crescent Home; and Mrs. Sinclair, Belvidere Hospital. Mrs. Sinclair's absence was much regretted, as she was one of the pioneers in nursing reform in Glasgow, and has devoted the past 40 years of her life to the bettering of the condition of nursing.

Mrs. Strong is known to be very much interested in the vital question of proper standards for nurses' examinations, and may be trusted to do her utmost in this matter which is of so much importance to the profession at large.

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