

Scottish nurses are quite prepared to welcome and to pass the highest standard of examination that may be instituted by the Board appointed through the agency of the British Bills, and they claim, along with their English and Irish sisters, equal rights of exercising their profession in any part of the United Kingdom, so that they may have the opportunity of gaining such position as their merits may secure.

MISS ISLA STEWART PRESENTS THE NURSES' PETITIONS.

MISS ISLA STEWART said: Sir, as the Matron and Superintendent of Nursing at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, I have been requested to place before you some of the reasons why trained nurses desire the passing of a Nurses' Bill by Parliament, and I beg to hand in a copy of a number of resolutions passed in favour of Registration by Medical and Nursing Societies, and petitions in favour of the same measure, signed by members of the general public, because these together represent a very widespread desire for, and appreciation of the necessity of, such legislation.

The present condition of the nursing world is most detrimental to trained nurses and to the progress of nursing education, and it is therefore detrimental to the sick of all classes of the community. Every hospital is self-governing, and is therefore a law to itself. Medical students must get their practical training in hospitals of a certain size, and possessing certain educational advantages, and those hospitals must strictly conform to and carry out the general principles of education defined by the General Medical Council. The result is that there is the same system of education, and much the same method, in every medical school in the United Kingdom. But in the case of nurses, hospitals, however large or small, have so-called training schools, and as there is no supervising and controlling authority in the nursing world, every hospital gives as much or as little training to nurses as best suits its own methods of working. Throughout the United Kingdom there is no accepted standard of training, or even accepted method of training nurses. There is no recognised and generally adopted system of examining nurses who have finished their training, and the certificates which are issued by every hospital vary greatly. Hospital certificates may mean much or little, and their value may actually vary from time to time, as different methods are introduced. This condition of affairs results in much confusion, and it is almost impossible to estimate the value of any given certificate.

It is felt to be most unfair by nurses that, at the end of three or four years' hospital work, they should find themselves competing as private nurses with women who have only had short terms of training in special hospitals, or have been dismissed after three or four months' trial as utterly unsuitable for nursing work.

It is also deeply resented by trained nurses, that there should be no means of exercising professional discipline, as is the case in other professions, and that they have no power of excluding from their ranks those who bring discredit upon them. They most earnestly desire that Parliament should give

them the means of distinguishing trained nurses from the many persons who adopt the uniform without justification.

Finally, Sir, I desire to emphasise the fact that trained nursing is now a matter of national importance. Nurses are not only entrusted with the care of the sick in private houses and in public hospitals, but they are being employed in increasing numbers in the different Government Departments of this country. They serve under the Admiralty, the War Office, and are now being organised to help in the Territorial Forces. They have proved their usefulness to the Colonial Office and to the Indian Medical Service, whilst many thousands are now engaged in Workhouse Hospitals and in other positions under the Local Government Board. They are being employed in increasing numbers in the sanitary service of the country, for the prevention of diseases in schools, in teaching cleanliness and health to the children, whilst the work they are doing for the poorest, in the preservation of the public health as district nurses, is securing the unqualified praise of those who are best able to judge their work.

We venture, therefore, to consider that, by the great improvements which nurses have made in face of enormous difficulties in the last twenty years, they have earned the right to ask Parliament to give them the public recognition which has been accorded to other professions—a method of professional control over their education, and the enforcement of discipline among their ranks, which have done so much for the advancement of other professions—and thus to increase their usefulness and to raise a most honourable profession to its proper position in the estimation of the public.

MISS M. HUXLEY SPEAKS FOR IRISH NURSES.

MISS M. HUXLEY:—Sir, in the few words I am permitted to say this afternoon, I speak as representing the Nursing Profession in Ireland.

For twenty years I have worked by constitutional methods that our profession might be recognised by the State.

I and my colleagues in Ireland consider it is essential that a properly constituted Central Governing Body should, amongst other reforms, fix a minimum standard of nursing education. At present we have no such standard, and the existing schools vary so much in their methods of training that they come well within the designation of good, bad, and indifferent.

At present certificates are given to young women by institutions which make no proper provision for their training. They have not been taught by a qualified person, their work has not been supervised, and their theoretical study is almost *nil*; yet these women go forth into the world certified as efficient, which they most undoubtedly are not.

We think there can be no question as to the importance of our work to the nation, and there is certainly no doubt as to our desire to properly qualify for it, and I am happy to say it is one of the very few subjects on which we are agreed. (Laughter, and hear, hear.) This fact was proved by the earnestness and intensity with which we

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