

while she sent for assistance. Miss Cancellor agreed that might be an extreme case, but said that in large hospitals junior nurses were not allowed to carry out treatment.

Miss A. C. Gibson said that a great difficulty was that discipline could not be enforced in small hospitals in the same way as in large. The more discipline there was during training the more useful the nurse afterwards. Much waste of good material went on because nurses were only half trained. She thought, however, that in the large hospitals the probationers had better begin at the very beginning.

Miss Purvis (Middlesbrough) thought the smaller hospitals were good training ground for those too young for general training. Miss Cancellor said that meant that the training in the small institutions did not count.

Miss H. L. Pearse thought that if nurses were properly paid the utilization of every institution for training purposes would cease, as fully trained nurses, where available, could be employed instead of probationers.

#### THE POLITICAL POSITION IN THE NURSING WORLD.

Miss E. M. Musson, R.R.C., said that when war broke out the demand for State Registration of Trained Nurses was slowly but surely making way, the rank and file of the nurses were mostly convinced, the House of Lords had passed a Nurses Registration Bill, the House of Commons had endorsed the principle by a majority of 228 on the first reading of the Bill in 1914. The Prime Minister and the Home Secretary (then Mr. McKenna) had told influential deputations that the opposition was the only thing in the way—there was no time for contentious legislation—and advised them to conciliate it. At that time it seemed as if nothing short of a miracle would reconcile the opposition. Then war broke out, and it became impossible to get a private member's Bill considered. But the war had worked miracles, and practically done away with the opposition to State Registration of Nurses. The most difficult opposition had come from members of the nursing profession—the Matrons of the large training schools—and the conditions arising out of the war had brought these Matrons—with one exception—to see that registration was necessary, unless the members of their trained staffs, when they returned from service abroad, were to be cut out by untrained women, and the temporary arrangements created by the exigencies of the war allowed to continue as permanent. For instance, district nursing societies had been obliged to make use of untrained help, but that must be put right at the end of the war, and competition with the fully trained of a host of semi-trained women must not be permitted.

Miss Musson did not wish anything she said to be construed as condemnation of V.A.D.s who, as long as they worked under a trained staff, could do good work. They were of all social positions, and all societies suffered from members who

brought discredit upon them. Most V.A.D.s had no intention of nursing at the conclusion of the war, and knew that if they did so it would be necessary for them to be trained. It was not only the V.A.D.s who had to be considered, but the host of half-trained people who had come to the fore. That had brought the Matrons round.

Also they had had a great deal to do with the Army Services, and the great inequality of training had been impressed upon them. Many of the nurses enrolled in the various Services were highly trained, others, although they had three years' certificates, had really not been taught or efficiently trained. That had brought home to the Matrons the necessity for the standardization of nursing education, and with it the registration of trained nurses.

Then came the bombshell of Mr. Stanley's Circular Letter of December 30th. It was not necessary to say very much of that, because the present scheme was so different that it was practically in the waste paper basket. At the time it came out it was much criticised, and she thought the nursing profession was to be congratulated that Mr. Stanley, though strong and determined, was sufficiently big-minded to own himself in the wrong, and he quickly acknowledged that State Registration of Nurses must be made one of the first planks in the College of Nursing Scheme. Mr. Stanley had said that after his letter was published he was amazed at the overwhelming demand there was for registration, and at the smallness and futility of the opposition.

At present there were two parties; one had been working at registration for a long time, the other was just beginning, but they hoped before long there would be an agreed Bill, promoted both by the Central Committee for State Registration of Nurses and the College of Nursing, Ltd. In that case Mr. Stanley had great hope that the Government would give time in the House of Commons for the consideration of the agreed Bill as a War Measure. Mr. Stanley had made mistakes, but once he took up a thing he was very determined, and she thought that nurses might congratulate themselves not only on having secured another supporter in the House of Commons, but that he was winning the support of the Training Schools for State Registration.

#### DISCUSSION.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick said there was registration and registration. There might be a system enforced which was more injurious than nothing at all.

The underlying principle of the demand for registration of trained nurses was the desire of public spirited nurses to protect their patients, as well as to obtain legal status and legal recognition for women doing most responsible work. They felt that so many divergent interests were connected with the nursing care of the sick that it was impossible these should be reconciled without the intervention of the law. It seemed a simple thing, but was not so simple as it appeared.

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