

## A DELUSION AND A SNARE.

The following letter appeared in *The British Medical Journal* on June 2nd:—

## REGISTRATION OF NURSES.

SIR,—The suggestion that women who have been nursing the sick for three years before November, 1919, should be admitted to the Register without taking any training into account seems to me deplorable. In my opinion the Register resulting will be absolutely farcical.

I suppose nurses, in self-defence, will have to register, but I hope they will one and all take good care to let the public know on every possible occasion that this registration is a "delusion and a snare."

The only status that a nurse should feel at all adequate to protect her high calling is membership of the College of Nursing. I for one will, on all occasions, draw a very material distinction between a so-called registered nurse and an adequately and fully-trained nurse as proved by her membership of the College of Nursing.

May I appeal to the better instincts in our ranks to voice their indignation on behalf of those women who have taken the trouble to go through a course of severe and arduous training in our hospitals?

I am, &c.,

G. W. R. SKENE,  
Chairman, Medical Committee, Willesden  
General Hospital.

London, N.W., May 21st.

To judge from his letter, Dr. G. W. R. Skene is evidently ignorant that the proposal that totally untrained women should be admitted to the General Part of the Nurses' Register emanated from the Council of the College of Nursing, Ltd., and that for months this company which runs a rival to the State Register, has been agitating to debase our standards.

The new Rule projected by the College, and thrust through the General Nursing Council by its representatives—now signed by the new Minister of Health—will, if agreed to by Parliament, render Nurses' Registration a positive danger to the public for the next twenty years, and the gross breach of faith with the trained nurses who have formed the Register under the present Statutory Rules, will do much to discourage honourable women adopting nursing as a profession.

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**DEMAND FOR ENQUIRY.**

At a meeting of the British Constitutional Labour Movement held on Saturday, June 2nd, 1923, the following resolution was passed unanimously, and the Secretary was instructed to forward it to the Prime Minister:—

"The British Constitutional Labour Movement very earnestly appeals to the Prime Minister to sanction the appointment as speedily as possible of a Select Committee of the House of Commons to enquire into the constitution, objects, methods of working, and finances of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, of the College of Nursing, Ltd., and of the Nation's Fund for Nurses."

## THE BRITISH HOSPITALS ASSOCIATION.

## SOME ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS.

*The Lancet* (June 9th) publishes certain passages of especial importance from communications made at the Annual Conference of the British Hospitals' Association, held at Sheffield, May 31st and June 1st. The following extract from an address dealing with problems of hospital administration, by Mr. Herbert L. Eason, Medical Superintendent of Guy's Hospital, we quote in full from *The Lancet*, as the question of the shortage of suitable probationers for training is one, which sooner or later, must be seriously considered by the community, with a view to increasing the supply by removing disabilities.

## Maintenance of the Supply of Nurses.

On the basis that this is one of the most acute problems with which we are faced. According to him, the present supply of probationers is most precarious, and there are few hospitals that have a full nursing staff. Before the war, probationers were not usually admitted for training until they were twenty-three years of age or over, but efforts to enlist the sympathy of head-mistresses in bringing nursing as a career to the notice of girls at school are met by the rejoinder that if there is a compulsory interval between leaving school and commencing training the girl drifts off into some other occupation or career. Probationers are therefore admitted into many hospitals now at the age of nineteen, but the experiment is far from being a success. Girls of this age often do not know their own mind and after a course of instruction in a preliminary training school many of them come to the conclusion that nursing does not appeal to them or that it is too hard. The percentage of sickness among young nurses is also much higher than among older women, as they are not sufficiently resistant to disease. Of every batch of probationers entering a preliminary training school at a hospital, from 25 to 50 per cent. may leave the hospital before the completion of their first year of training. It also appears to be the experience of many matrons that the more off-duty time that is allowed the higher is the incidence of sickness. The off-duty time is occupied with pleasure and amusement, and the nurse returns to her ward fatigued and more liable to infection. The probationer's life in these days is also made more strenuous by the increasing severity of her educational curriculum. The modern tendency is for the training of nurses to become more and more advanced on the scientific side so that there appears to be a danger that the curriculum for probationers will be little less than that of the woman doctor. As most of this mental work has to be done by the nurse in her off-duty hours when she is usually physically fatigued, the strain may soon become intolerable. As it is essential that a nurse should have a good physique, and physique and intellectual capacity do not always go hand in hand, there may be a

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