

tained a certificate is no guarantee of tact, temper, and character—tho' it may be of skill. One would have thought that a woman who had been for these years under the eye of a competent matron and medical staff, would of necessity possess more or less tact, temper, and character—not to mention skill. The Matron of the London Hospital has been a good deal before the public, in recent years, because she exercises her power to cut short certain aspirants in the middle of their career. But why? Because, she maintained, they did not possess that spirit which makes a successful Nurse. This is the kernel of the question. The years of training are test years in these very matters of tact, temper, and character, which are considered, and justly so, so essential. Want of tact, temper, and character bring their own Nemesis in their train, apart from any dismissal by a judicious Matron. Persons who have no tact, nor temper, nor character will probably never reach the end of their period of training, or come up for their final examination. The searching discipline and competition of work in a Hospital are a good guarantee of the possession of tact, temper, and character. If they are not, why that Hospital must, to a certainty, have an indifferent matron and staff, and be itself in a condition of inefficiency which will soon call for public inquiry.

Why should there not be a Nursing Register, as well as a Medical Register? Sir RICHARD WEBSTER does not go so far as to say that the Medical Register is a guarantee for the probity and genuineness of the names contained within it. It is nothing of the sort, even after the periodical expurgation which it undergoes. The late Attorney-General maintained, however, that it was a guarantee of adequate scientific skill, which is the main qualification demanded of a doctor. If this great lawyer had been in practice as a medical man, he could never have made such a statement. It is notorious that a physician is selected by his patients at least as often for his moral qualifications as for his intellectual. Did he himself select his doctor, when he was ill, because he was an M.D., or an F.R.C.S., or a gold medallist? Never! I make bold to say. If his family doctor wished a second opinion, he might have advised that a specialist be called in, in virtue of such distinctions. But every one knows that the public are very shy of calling in a new medical man until they know "something about him." That is their own expression. In so far as the Medical Register says nothing on this score, it is useless to the public. Just in the same degree would the proposed Nursing Register be useless to the public, no more and no less. In the

bulk of ordinary cases of illness both the doctor and the nurse are selected for their kindness, their sympathy of nature, and their genuineness, always assuming competent skill to meet the emergencies of ordinary practice. The Medical Register can give little or only an indirect guarantee on such points; but is it therefore useless? Is the Medical Register to be done away with? Certainly not!

A Nursing Register would be valuable in the same degree, and permanent for the same reason. In both cases, the names of certain doctors and nurses are before the public, and are subject to the fierce light of public criticism. These persons must have the sense of their responsibility, and they know that if they outrage their responsibility, discipline will follow with certainty and means of livelihood will be gone.

If the public select an attendant from either of these lists of persons equally qualified before the law, it has at least the guarantee that it is dealing with responsible persons who can be punished for carelessness or delinquency. In both cases the public will go further. It will, by inquiry, or report, or reference, soon get to know if the names before it are personally and morally recommended by those who have been already nursed or treated by these persons. No one who has not the requisite skill can appeal to it for employment at all. Whether the aspirant has the requisite temper can be learnt from inquiry. Where there is skill at least no great harm can be done. Personal objectionableness can soon be got rid of.

But what if there were no Register? Some smiling impostor is appointed, and some fatal blunder is committed before his scientific incompetency is found out. Many a worthless workman is smooth enough, genial enough, and plausible enough; he is none the less worthless and a blunderer. It is against such that a Register is a safeguard.

Curiously, those persons who have done most for Nursing are said to be against the proposed change. Perhaps they are proud of their work; but pride is a bad guide in matters of judgment. Perhaps they object to have a work which they have arrogated to themselves carried on by others. It is not unusual to find persons who ban every innovation which does not originate with themselves. Then there are wheels within wheels. The Nurses of England are a youthful body as such, and a weak body. Powerful interests would be menaced—I believe entirely to the benefit of the public—if Nurses appeared in just and powerful combination. But strong interests fight to the last to preserve their privileges. Then there is the feeling

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