

the education and qualifications of Nurses, and your petitioners believe that the maintenance by such a body of a general register of Nurses would seriously impede the progress which is now being made in the direction of the establishment in connection with all hospitals and infirmaries, of training schools of Nurses conducted upon systems of uniform excellence, and aiming at a uniformly high standard." Well, I have heard this argument before. It is sometimes said "you should not do anything at present because things are in a state of progression and will still further improve." Well I am afraid that, if that argument was listened to, however desirable a register might be, it would be postponing it for an indefinite period if we were to wait until a concurrence of opinion could be obtained upon such a matter. It is impossible that every two persons would hold different opinions upon so important a matter of decision, so that, however desirable the object sought for might be, a decision upon it would have to be indefinitely postponed if it could not be expressed until there was a concurrence of opinion in reference to the question. We have endeavoured, for the last 5 years in the General Medical Council and elsewhere, to elicit the views of those most eminently qualified to judge in such a matter as this, and consensus of opinion is in favour of some such plan as this, as is shown by the fact that our general register has exceeded, in strength, all our expectations. But our opponents say, "Until such a concurrence of opinion is obtained, it would, as your petitioners submit, be premature to establish a central body with exceptional powers, and controlling the education and qualification of Nurses." There again, we see the same misapprehensions, because we have no power, and seek no power, over the education of Nurses. At paragraph 8, it is urged: "Unless the Corporation, if established, should be in a position to determine conclusively (which having regard to the facts stated in the last paragraph would be impossible) which training schools should be considered efficient, and which should be deemed to fall short of efficiency, and unless they should, at the same time, confine the register to Nurses already upon the registers of such training schools as should be held to be efficient (in which case the register of the Corporation would be superfluous)."—I should like to know how long the state of things contemplated would go on. Why the evidence given before the Lords' Committee showed that they did not so confine the Register. But I suppose the Committee saw to what extent their Register could furnish information as to the character, and evidence of the fitness of persons at the present time. All the register contained would be information about the Nurses when they were in the Hospital. But, my lords, there is this singular and crucial difficulty between them and us—that they do not publish their registers so that the public when a lady Nurse proposes herself for an engagement can look at the register and see for themselves what her qualifications have been and what her reputation is. But to say that, because they keep registers—which according to the evidence given before the Lords' Committee they did not in every case—to publish a register is superfluous is certainly rather surprising. The very essence of the question is that there is no public means by which anybody can get access to those registers for the purpose of ascertaining what is the qualification of a Nurse, as regards character, as well as technical training. That is the very essence of the case. Then, as I have shown your lordships, it goes on—"The existence of such a register as is contemplated by the draft charter would, in the opinion of your petitioners, necessarily lead to numbers of insufficiently trained and inferior Nurses being placed thereon side by side

with and (in the eyes of the public) on the same footing as their highly trained and thoroughly competent sisters." Again, my lords, I suppose I ought to be grateful to my learned friends for the extreme value which they attach to the standard which has been maintained by the Nurses' Association. But, my lords, have they so little confidence in their own reputation; have they so little confidence in the knowledge of their work, by medical men and by those who employ nurses, that they even cannot trust the public to be told that A. B. was trained at the Nightingale School, and that C. D. was trained at some other school, in order that the public and medical men may know the value of the training. It appears to me that they are stultifying themselves by such an objection. If the information is given where particular nurses are trained they ought to be obliged to us, for advertising those facts. They ought to be obliged to us for telling the public who the nurses are who received the benefit of a training in those places. If a nurse trained at the Nightingale School is placed side by side with a nurse trained elsewhere or at an inferior school, so much the better for the Nightingale School, and so much the better for A. B. in place of C. D. if that becomes known. The objection then goes on to state—"Thus the Register would be untrustworthy, and would afford no protection either to the public or to any medical man who should be called upon to recommend a Nurse. At the same time an injury would be inflicted upon the best trained and most competent Nurses, the general standard of nursing would be lowered, and there would be great danger that the incentives to advancement and improvement which at present exist might be seriously impaired." Paragraph 9.—"The untrustworthiness of the Register would, in the opinion of your Petitioners, be the more serious because whatever basis of registration the Corporation might take, they could not adequately, or at all, test the existence in any Nurse of the personal and moral qualities mentioned in paragraph 5 hereof. And your Petitioners desire to add that such untrustworthiness would be increased by the extreme difficulty of adequately revising the Register, and of removing the name of any person therefrom, except in the case of gross misconduct." I quite agree with that, and quite agree that there are instances in which this will occur in every Register. Do what you will, you cannot make a perfect list, but you can do much towards it, and at any rate your imperfect efforts are better than nothing. We can do something. At present, they do not pretend that they can rely upon their own lists. There is no means of inquiring into the subsequent life of the Nurses, so that it is simply idle to object that I cannot do everything, whereas I can do something. And I can do something which they do not do. At paragraph 10 the objection proceeds:—"Your petitioners further submit that inasmuch as most of the large training schools keep lists of the Nurses trained by them, and inasmuch as all requisite information with regard to such Nurses can, at any time, be obtained on application to such schools by any member of the public, or by any medical man wishing to engage a Nurse such a register as that contemplated by the Draft Charter is unnecessary. Moreover the training schools can and do keep in touch with their Nurses after they have left the schools, and the information supplied by them is therefore, besides being trustworthy, more complete than that supplied by such a register as aforesaid could possibly be." That paragraph, my lords, demonstrates the use of such a register as I desire. You want at once

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