

mentary register. I am thus enabled to make enquiries as to what she has done in the interval, and to help her on further, or to give full information concerning her. Therefore, every nurse who once gets a hospital certificate can get every good from her own hospital, and the standard by which she is judged is very real all round." Now, my lords, I ask your lordships to consider this one practical point. There is nothing in the charter which is to indicate to the public that the Register is simply to be a Directory, where any information is to be obtained. It will be of necessity regarded as being a certificate of merit in the person entered upon the Register. Say what you like, you cannot avoid that being the consequence. Your lordships have to consider, having regard to the peculiar necessities and qualifications of nurses' profession, whether that is an improvement or the reverse. Now I will turn to page 457, question 7755. Mr. Treves, Chief Surgeon at the London Hospital, is being examined, and he is asked:—

"Do you think that the registration of nurses, that is so much talked about now, would be a good system? No, I think it would be a very bad system. It certainly would be very injurious to the body of nurses, it would be injurious to the public, and I think it would be injurious to medical men.

Will you explain your reasons why it would be injurious to the body of nurses? For this reason; it would place all so-called trained nurses upon a level; as a matter of fact, it is impossible to speak of a great body of nurses merely as trained nurses. They have all been through a certain curriculum, and at the end of that time a certain percentage might be absolutely useless, and should be sent to nurse no kind of case; then a certain other percentage will be found suitable for this kind of case or that; they sink, however, to one level; the public send to an office and obtain a registered nurse; she has one qualification, she has fulfilled the desired curriculum. If those nurses are obtained from St. Thomas, or Guy's, or the London Hospital, or any large hospital, the nurse is sent out for that especial case, and is backed by the authority and reputation of the hospital which sends her out. That secures to the public the best possible nurse that can be obtained for the particular case." It may be a desirable change if there is no accompanying evils or inconveniences. But there is to be nothing in the Register to show that St. Thomas' is better than Guy's, or Guy's better than St. Thomas, or that their school of training is different. I point out that medical men and the public themselves are driven to go to a place where information can be obtained: it may be an institute of nurses where nurses are qualified; it may be the London Hospital or somewhere else, and ask for nurses, and the nurses from the hospital are sent out, if desired, for the particular case they are to go and nurse. That is utterly foreign to the suggestion of such a Register.

LORD HANNEN; That is a different branch; these are valuable institutions, and if you send to them you get what you ask.

SIR R. WEBSTER; But it is admitted that the effect of this registration will be to bring all Nurses to a level. What the registration suggests as to the efficiency of the Nurse, appears to me an extremely dangerous thing, in view of what are the necessities and what might be the qualifications necessary in the particular case. I think there is another part of this witness' statement which is deserving of some weight. He is asked—"Would you now say why the system is injurious to medical men?" And in reply he says: "Might I complete the answer with reference to the injury to the public? The public endeavour, when sick, to have a thoroughly well-trained Nurse; and to take a Nurse who is simply on the register is equivalent to a family wishing to engage a governess, simply going to an office and hearing that A. B. & C. are on the register of governesses, and taking the first that comes in alphabetical order. She may turn out an admirable governess, or she may not. The

usual course, I take it, would be to accept no kind of register of governesses, but to secure that particular lady who has the qualifications that are required. And this register system does away with equality in the matter. The Nurses are all on the same level; the public are told that they are all the same; the patient who wants a nurse for typhoid fever on the one hand or for a fractured thigh on the other, simply puts his hand in a basket and picks out the first name that comes. That is the working of that scheme." Now, we have got to consider what is the tendency of the Register; what is it likely to induce people to do, and that is a tendency to publish a paper qualification as being equivalent to the actual qualification of a person. It is injurious. It is not as if it was necessary for the protection of the public. If it were, it should be compulsory. As your lordships know under the medical acts a person cannot practice or carry on business without certain qualifications. But there is nothing in this Charter to prevent a person carrying on business as a nurse without certain qualifications. I point out that, it being essential to the profession of nurse, that there should be some direction, there should be a direction to obtain information from a source of direct information. The effect of the Register would be to send people where there would be the least information, and to rely on the information on the register itself for that purpose. The witness says:—"The working of the present scheme is that a nurse is wanted for a case of typhoid fever; the particulars of the case are sent to any large hospital, and a proper nurse is sent in answer to that request. So that the other scheme is unfair to the public, because it prevents them, or may prevent them, from discriminating between suitable and unsuitable nurses." Then question 7763:—"I ask you whether you might not have a system of registration conducted by a responsible body who would make themselves responsible for the character of the person sent out?—That would be perfectly possible.

Would that be open to your objection?—That would be admirable, but there is no such scheme as that before the public that I know of. He points out that it would be admirable, but that there was no such scheme before the public that he knew of, and then he is asked:—

"I thought that was the scheme; but at all events, your objection applies to an indiscriminate registration?" And he replies:—"More than that; it is to registering nurses with a minimum qualification, the least possible evidence of fitness.

"Supposing (as I understand it is intended to do) a responsible body of persons is established for the registration of nurses, and supposing they kept a register of the qualifications of the Nurses, what they had done, what they were fit for, and generally, that followed the same course as the London hospitals, it would not be open to the objections you have urged? Only to the one objection, that that body would not have that personal knowledge of the nurse that the hospital would have had.

"Many of them do know the Nurses personally, but if they did not they would refer to the hospital for their characters?—If one could have such an omniscient body it would be absolutely perfect." Now, I submit to your lordships that in the large important cases, registration will not be an innovation; and unless it be compulsory the new registration is no safeguard to the public, because in point of fact we have already persons, equally good nurses, practically good nurses, and yet not upon the register, which, after all, is only to contain the names of those who have joined and become members of the Association. I could refer of course to several other witnesses in this connection, but I should like to come at once to the view of Miss Nightingale. My learned friend said something which might tend to depreciate in your lordships' minds the weight to be given to the opinion of Miss Nightingale. Your lordships were told that Miss Nightingale took no practical interest or concern—

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