

cite Miss Nightingale's opinion at all? He cited it from a speech delivered by Mr. Rathbone.

Sir RICHARD WEBSTER.—Will my learned friend pardon me? There are other passages in the Blue Book. That is not the only passage. It is quite true that I did read it from Mr. Rathbone's speech, but it is recited in various other passages.

Lord HOBHOUSE.—It is also referred to in the second report, but I suppose Mr. Rathbone's speech is quite sufficient.

Sir HORACE DAVEY.—Quite so. My impression is that it was a quotation from the speech of Mr. Rathbone, in which he includes a passage from a letter which he there states that he received from Miss Nightingale, and in which Miss Nightingale is reported to have said:—"You cannot select the good from the inferior nurses by any test or system of examination. But most of all, and first of all, must their moral qualifications be made to stand pre-eminent in estimation. All this can only be secured by the current supervision, tests, or examinations, which they receive in their training school or hospital, not by any examination from 'a foreign body' like that proposed by the British Nurses' Association. Indeed, those who came off best in such, would probably be the ready and forward, not the best nurses'."

If my learned friend intended to rely on the letter, he should have printed the whole of it. I won't complain of the letter itself, and I am sure that Mr. Rathbone would not quote it unfairly. But what is Miss Nightingale's opinion founded on? She expressed an opinion which other people expressed, and which is not confined to Miss Nightingale, that examinations are of very little value. It may be true or it may be false, but it has nothing whatever to do with this, because this body does not propose to be, and is not, an examining body. She apparently founds her opinion on the view that has been represented to her that the Association proposed in its Charter, to have examinations for nurses' similar to the examinations which medical men have to go through, and she expressed her opinion upon them, and expressed her opinion in terms which so far as I am concerned I see no reason to dissent from. But that opinion, so far as the present inquiry is concerned, was expressed under a complete misapprehension as to the nature of the work which the Association desires to do, and has nothing whatever to do with any question before your lordships. Then Mr. Rathbone speaking says "As Miss Nightingale has said, 'twenty or thirty years hence, when so much progress has been made that our present time is looked back upon as the time of bad nursing, this registration might do.'" Well, I am obliged to my friend and Mr. Rathbone for that utterance, and regret that they consider the present is a time of bad nursing. Where I differ from her is in the practical postponement of attempts to progress. Twenty or thirty years hence, they will say nursing has not yet reached perfection, let us wait till it does. I have heard that sort of argument before in reference to other matters, and I am sure some of your Lordships who have been engaged in public questions all your lives, have also heard that sort of argument before.

Lord HOBHOUSE.—I suppose thirty years ago it would have been a good argument. They would not have registered all the "Gamps" then.

Sir HORACE DAVEY.—People who use such arguments say, "Do not go to the expense of improving your artillery now, because a few years hence your artillery will be perfected to a larger extent. Do not go to the expense of lighting your towns or your houses with the electric

light, because a few years hence the electric light will have received greater developments, and so forth. If this argument were to prevail, we should never do anything, but always wait while other societies and people were preparing to improve a particular science, or art, or profession. I must say that I bow with all humility, and listen with respect—as I am sure your lordships will—to anything that Miss Nightingale has to say on this subject. I, at least, am not likely to forget, nor I am quite sure will your lordships, the eminent services which Miss Nightingale has rendered in an unobtrusive and feminine manner, both to the nation and to the country, and to the profession of nursing. For all that, I am bound, when an opinion is cited in the way my learned friend cited it, to look at it and see whether that opinion gives a true estimate of the facts of the case, whether the opinion is directed to the existing conditions and the existing state of facts, and also it is not the slightest want of respect to Miss Nightingale to estimate and weigh as far as you can the grounds of the opinion on which it is based. Unfortunately my lords, we are often obliged to differ in opinion from those we respect none the less, and no one should differ lightly from the opinion of a competent person, and presume to differ from the opinion of a competent person. But it would be one of the greatest misfortunes in the world if we allowed ourselves to be dominated and our judgment to be sat upon by the opinion of persons who presumably are authorities on any subject, and I for my part will never acquiesce in that. Now my learned friend has recited the opinions of a number of persons, including many who have done good work in the training of nurses, but I am not aware that their opinion is better than that of any other people's. He quoted the opinions (among others) of Mr. Rathbone and Mr. Bonham Carter, both gentlemen whose intelligence and character command respect for any opinions which they deliberately express. I am quite of opinion that their opinion is entitled to just as much weight as the opinion of any other intelligent, well educated and cultured gentleman—but to no more. I will pass, therefore, from the opinions my learned friend has cited. I forbear to trouble your lordships with contrary opinions expressed because, a good deal of this is merely expression of opinion.

Lord HOBHOUSE.—Oh yes, that is always the case.

Sir H. DAVEY.—I might pick out a good many passages in which opinions are expressed by gentlemen who are entitled to express opinions on the other side of the question. But my learned friend, although he cited these opinions, did not mention, but seemed rather to leave out of sight, the fact that the House of Lords Committee, which was unusually strong, after hearing all these opinions and what is called the evidence, came to the conclusion which I have read to your lordships, that three years' training was required to satisfy the exigencies of the calling of a Nurse. Now, my lords, there are one or two other points which it is right and proper that I should say a few words upon. I desire to say at once that my friend has criticised, and rightly and justly criticised, some language in our charter, and I myself when I read the charter had very grave doubts in my mind as to whether any charter ought to contain the power to prescribe penalties. If I am asked my opinion I should say it would be incompetent for the Crown to give the power to any body of the kind to create penalties, and therefore I agree that in this respect the charter is following a bad precedent.

Lord HANNEN.—You do not ask for that?

Sir H. DAVEY.—No, my lord, I think it would be objectionable for the Crown to give power to any private

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