

any persons who had in fact nursed for three years, "whether trained in hospital or not," had been engaged in nursing the sick for three years, might take advantage of registration, provided that their credentials and testimonials were satisfactory, to the Registration Board appointed by the Association. That would, of course, account for a large number of persons being on the register who would avail themselves of that opportunity of being registered, although not trained in an hospital. That is in entire concordance with previous precedents. I have looked at the dentists register, and I find that when the dentists register was formed those persons who had been, *de facto*, practising dentistry for a certain period, before the passing of the Act, were allowed to place their names on the register, stating the number of years they had been engaged in practice. You must commence a register in that way, and it will, of course, have a certain period of grace, after which the proper qualification will be effective. It is quite possible—I do not know that it is so, but it is quite possible that many of those to whom my learned friend has referred are the names of young women who had been put on the register having satisfied the Registration Board of their character, and that they have *de facto* been engaged in nursing the sick during a period of three years. Then, my lords, my learned friend says, "Oh, why don't you put at the head of the register that you don't answer for the competence of your nurses. If you put at the top of your list that you do not answer for the competence of your nurses there will be an end of our objection." But, my learned friend has not observed that that is exactly what we do. We do put at the head of the register in the preface to the book, the following statement:—"In accordance with the suggestion made by the Select Committee of the House of Lords appointed to inquire into the Metropolitan Hospitals, the Registration Board wishes most distinctly to state that it cannot answer for the technical knowledge of any registered nurse, nor for the nature of the training which she has received, but that every hospital must, of necessity, be held responsible for the credentials which it has issued, and upon which the Registration Board is compelled to rely." That seems to me to be a perfectly fair statement. If my learned friend says our registration would be rendered valueless if we put at the head that we do not answer for the qualifications of the nurses, I say that we distinctly point out that we cannot be answerable for the technical knowledge or competence of any nurse, that these hospitals that give certificates must be answerable themselves, if they desire those certificates to be treated as a testimonial of competence. But we merely record the fact that the person has been in the hospital for a certain period of time. Let them (the hospitals) frame their certificates in any way they please. It is perfectly open to them, in any proper case when they cannot honestly give a certificate of competence, to withhold the certificate. But if they do give certificates in one form, which apply to those who are most qualified, as well as to those who are least qualified, then they cannot complain if the public are obliged to confide or rely on these certificates which they give. My learned friend has said, and with very great truth, that there is a great difference in nurses. I shall not dwell any more on that point, because it is one as to which there is no difference of opinion between us. My learned friend spoke of his views of a Royal Charter and of what would be the ultimate effect of establishing a Register like this, and he warned your lordships of the consequences, illustrating and supporting his observations by citing the evidence of some of the witnesses who gave

evidence before the Lords Committee. I take the liberty of saying that, we have not all the same sanguine anticipations as those which one lady indulged in before the Committee, and if they desire any powers they must content themselves with such powers as may be granted by incorporation by charter, or by Board of Trade. Of course it would not be right that any power should be authorised by the Queen, or by other people which would enable any persons or Associations to impose such conditions as would prevent any persons from earning their livelihood as they had been accustomed to do heretofore. Now your lordships have heard it stated that competent nurses are excluded from our lists and the same must be said of every register or of every list that prescribes a minimum qualification. There are, of course, geniuses, or without being a genius there are persons, who by skill and industry and natural aptitude, become far more competent nurses, after a few months' or even a few weeks' training, than other persons will become after a training of years. But, my lords, we cannot help that; all we can do is to invite persons who do fulfil or possess certain qualifications to register themselves. Persons such as those my learned friend describes, will be perfectly justified in stating the reasons why their names cannot be found there. Nay, more, my lord, I say this: If it should be the fact that a large number of competent nurses—those who are found competent by experience—are not to be found on the Register it will create such discredit of our Register and will justify the public in disregarding our Register, so entirely that it would cease to be of any value as to credentials or any thing else. But it is not right to say that the Association by their bye-laws and regulations (which have to be approved by the Privy Council) would prescribe such conditions as would stultify themselves and render their register useless. My lords, my learned friend seems difficult to please. On the one hand, he complains that we exclude from our register a number of competent nurses, and, on the other hand, he complains that we include in our list a number who are incompetent. On the one hand, he complains of the difficulty of competent nurses getting on to the list because we do not admit persons who have not had three years' training, whilst, on the other hand, he complains that incompetent persons have been admitted to our list who have not had such training. He says that to fix a three years' limit excludes persons who had not have the opportunity of having that training, but who yet are competent nurses. My learned friend cannot succeed in both objections. He cannot have it both ways. That (the qualification) is a matter of regulation, and we must assume, in fairness to this Association, as well as to every other body of ladies and gentlemen—we must assume that they will work their powers and use their powers so as best to obtain the object aimed at, and not deviate from it, and for that purpose they will neither put their qualifications so high as to exclude competent nurses, nor yet put them so low as to include incompetent nurses. Of course you cannot do anything more than that, and the objections my learned friend thus put forward on behalf of his clients were merely objections that would apply to every register and every list which was kept in any place. Then my learned friend commented on the difficulty of getting a person off the register. Well, of course, it is difficult. Of course there is a natural reluctance on the part of people to giving information which will have the result, or may have the result, of depriving women of earning a livelihood. I am afraid that the feeling cannot be got rid of, but at least we do this: we provide a body to which complaints may be brought. Now, my lords, un-

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