

one of public utility. Since then the advance of the Nursing craft in usefulness and even in importance has been almost immeasurable. But until four years ago no step had been taken to carry out the above-mentioned suggestion. Then an official of the Stock Exchange seized the idea, which had been revived by a well-known Hospital Matron, and endeavoured to institute a Register of Nurses, which should be practically under his own control. Most fortunately, however, some of those whom he had persuaded to assist him foresaw the difficulties and dangers of organising a large body of professional workers under such auspices. And just when a serious crisis was impending, the danger was averted by the rapid and successful foundation of the British Nurses' Association in order to undertake the work of Registration, and to keep it in purely professional hands.

As we have often pointed out, the first step which was taken was to obtain the assistance and advice of the leaders of the medical profession; and then when the foundation principles had been clearly laid down, Membership was in the first instance, and for the first few months, freely offered to women who had been working for three years in nursing the sick, whether previously trained or not. This would appear to have been a bare measure of generosity, if not of justice, at the commencement of such a movement. But the Association was week by week vituperated by the organ edited and owned by the Stock Exchange official to whom we have above alluded, and especially on the ground of this preliminary condition of Membership. To such an extent indeed was abuse carried, that the Association, headed by a Royal Princess, supported and joined by many of the leaders of the medical and nursing world, was actually asserted to be composed of the "scum of the nursing profession." Then as its organisation became more and more complete, its numbers and influence increased, and its scheme of Registration became more developed, the opposition took a more active shape. A protest against the mere idea of a Register was drawn up by the very people who had a few short months before been striving their utmost to carry out such a scheme themselves. It denounced Registration for Nurses root and branch, and actually asserted that this publication of a book containing the names and addresses of Trained Nurses, and the character and date of the certificates which each one held from her Hospital, would lower the position of the best Trained Nurses, would be detrimental to the advancement of the teaching of Nursing, and would be disadvantageous to the public and the medical profession. It was known then that the

London Hospital was taking the most prominent part in this attempt to prevent Registration.

So far as this great Institution is concerned, the reasons why it so strongly opposed the Registration is now plain to everybody. Seeing that the Blue Book proves that it has been in the habit of systematically defrauding the public by supplying them with semi-trained pupils as Private Nurses, and has been deriving a large income from the imposition, there can be no surprise felt that it should have struggled so hard to prevent the public being supplied with a Register of Trained Nurses, in which of course the names of these employées would not be found. We only commend this fact, and the one solitary argument in the pamphlet issued officially by the London Hospital against this Women's Association, to the calm consideration of honourable men like the DUKE OF WESTMINSTER, SIR RUTHERFORD ALCOCK, and others who were persuaded into signing the public protest against Registration. The argument was that there was no necessity to protect the public from untrained Nurses, seeing that thoroughly Trained Private Nurses could be obtained by application to many Hospitals. The sheer impudence of such an argument under the circumstances needs no further comment. But it has endeavoured to prevent the public being protected from the hundreds of women who are now able to assume the title of Trained Nurse, and with, or without, forged or stolen Certificates and Testimonials, to obtain work and to do irreparable harm to the sick; or even from "the many well Certificated Nurses who, by drunkenness, theft, or even graver crimes have proved themselves to be entirely unworthy of trust."

The British Nurses' Association, thanks to Her Royal Highness its President, and the leaders of the Medical and Nursing professions, who have so steadfastly and truly supported it—has done a great public work in instituting a system which has worked well in every other profession, and which will undoubtedly protect the sick and purify the Nursing world. And we cannot doubt that the few honourable men who were induced to oppose the scheme will be annoyed when they discover how, and why, they have been misled, and will accord to the British Nurses' Association all the more energetic and powerful support in future.

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✎ "OBSTETRIC NURSING."—By *Obstetrica*, M.B.N.A.—Owing to an unusual pressure of current news upon our space, we are reluctantly compelled to hold over the above Lecture until next issue.

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