

**Special education for women : resolutions & report on the education of women in midwifery, management of medical institutions, dispensing medicines, and nursing.**

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Royal College of Physicians of London

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GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL.

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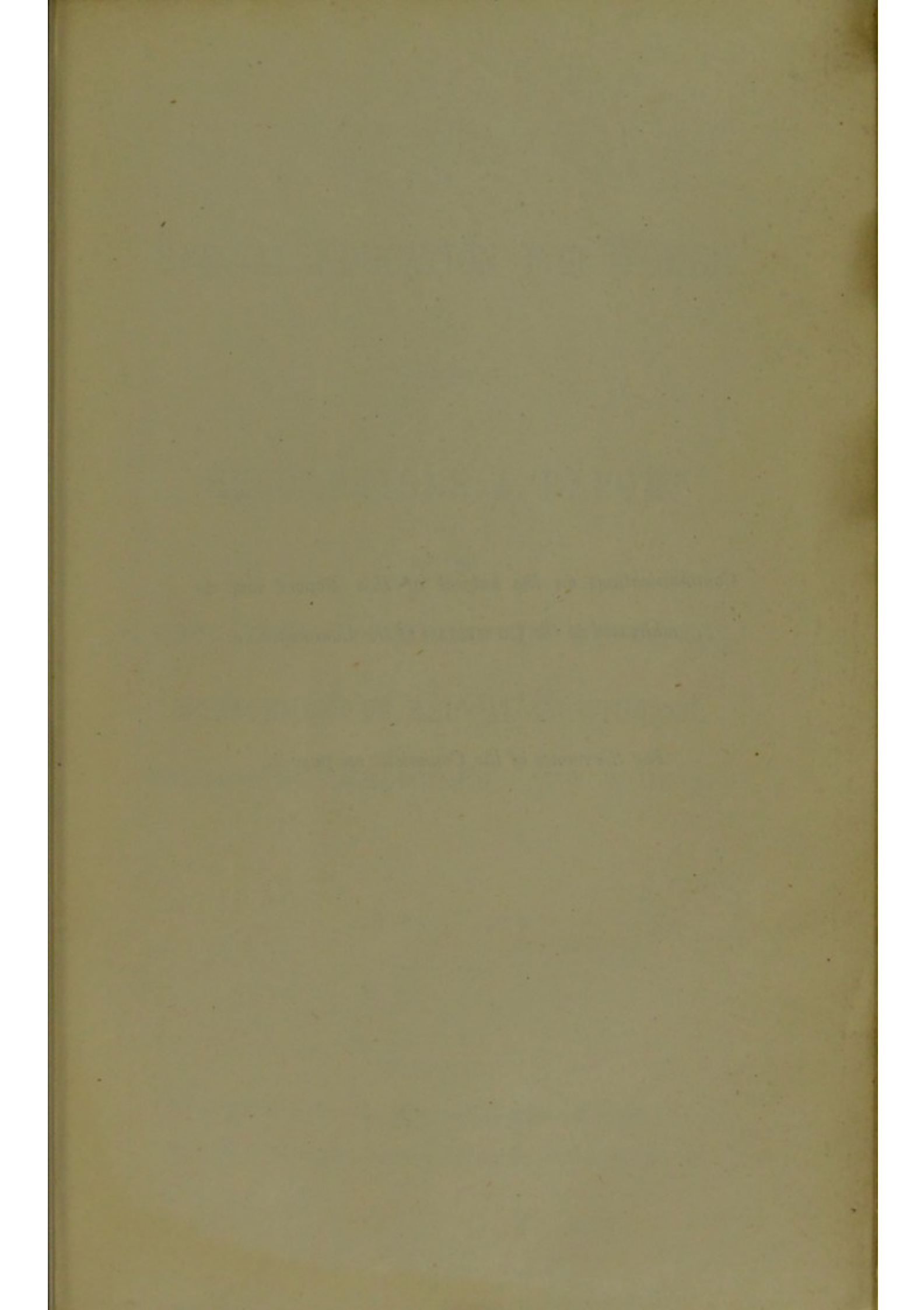
SPECIAL  
EDUCATION OF WOMEN.

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RESOLUTIONS AND REPORT.

APRIL 1873.





*Communications on the subject of this Report may be  
addressed to the CHAIRMAN of the Committee.*

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*For the names of the Committee see page 2.*

# SPECIAL EDUCATION FOR WOMEN.

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## RESOLUTIONS & REPORT

ON THE

EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN MIDWIFERY,

MANAGEMENT OF MEDICAL INSTITUTIONS,

DISPENSING MEDICINES, AND NURSING.

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APRIL 1873.

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LONDON:

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*Committee.*

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Sir WILLIAM GULL, Bart., London.

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Dr. RICHARD QUAIN, London.

RICHARD QUAIN, Esq., London.

Dr. WILLIAM STOKES, Dublin.

Dr. ALLEN THOMSON, Glasgow.

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RESOLUTIONS  
OF  
GENERAL MEDICAL COUNCIL.

April 3rd, 1873.

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That the Report be received and entered on the Minutes.

That the Committee be reappointed and be empowered—

*Firstly*—\* To enter into communication with any Public Institution in which there is provision for the Education and Examination of Women as

1. Midwives.
2. Dispensers.
3. Superintendents of Nurses and  
of Medical Institutions.

*Secondly*—To consider and report whether, and in what manner a Register of persons qualified to act as Midwives, Dispensers, and Superintendents of Nurses and Medical Institutions, might be kept.

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\* NOTE.—It is to be understood that the Committee is required to do this *in addition* to communicating with the existing Licensing Bodies.

## REPORT.

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The Committee appointed on March 5th, 1872, at the close of the last Meeting of the Council, having considered the subjects referred to them, report as follows :

### R E P O R T.

The Council resolved, March 5th, 1872 :—

“ That a Committee be appointed to consider and report whether the General Medical Council has power to make rules for the special Education of women, such as may entitle them to obtain a Qualification to be certified by the Council.

“ And that the Committee do further report for what purposes such Qualifications, if any, should be granted ; what are the most desirable means for Educating, Examining, and Certifying in respect of them, with especial reference to Midwifery, the Management of Medical Institutions, Dispensing, and Nursing.”

## I.

With reference to the 1st clause of the Resolution, the Committee are of opinion :

1st. That the Council has no power to make rules for the Education of man or woman.

2nd. The Council has no authority to lay down what will entitle any one to be registered.

3rd. The Council is bound to register any Qualification specified in the Act, on production of evidence of such Qualification, and can register no other.

Therefore, if a woman become entitled to any one of the Qualifications in Schedule A, she is entitled of right to be registered in respect of these, but not otherwise.

No Licensing Body can create any new Qualification beyond those mentioned in Schedule A, and if they were to attempt it the Council would be obliged to refuse to register.

Your Committee are therefore compelled to say that the Medical Council has no power under the Act of 1858 either to make special rules for the Education of women, or to give to women a Qualification different from that of men, or to supply any national want, should there be such, of women specially certificated for any department or departments of medicine.

## II.

With respect to the *first* part of the second clause of your Resolution: For what purpose such Qualifications, if any, ought to be granted—your Committee have made inquiries as to the prevailing usages or laws of foreign countries. They find, *first*, that in Germany, France and Russia there are special regulations affecting Midwives.

*Secondly*, that in France and Russia the practice of Dispensing drugs by women is common in public institutions, the women being Sœurs de Charité, or belonging to religious orders. In France the training for this purpose is voluntary and traditional. In Germany it is compulsory and legal; women who dispense even in religious houses for their own purposes are in Germany necessarily “qualified.”

*Thirdly*, that in some parts of Germany, *e.g.* Carlsruhe and Hesse-Darmstadt Nurses are specially trained under definite instructions. Persons so trained are subjected to various precise regulations, and receive certificates of competency. They further find that special instruction is given in England for the higher class of nurses, by Miss NIGHTINGALE'S School, at St. Thomas's, and by various affiliated and kindred institutions, specially King's College, University College, Liverpool Workhouse, and the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh.

## III.

The following statement contains such further details on the above points as seem to be requisite for the information of the Council.

## 1st.—AS TO MIDWIVES.

Elaborate regulations regarding the education of Midwives have lately been made under special instructions from the Government of Russia.\*

They are of considerable interest on account of the completeness of their aim. The following is a summary of their Provisions:

ABSTRACT OF SUBJECTS OF INSTRUCTION TO  
MIDWIVES IN RUSSIA.

## 1ST YEAR.

Normal Anatomy, including Histology of the Normal Tissues; Physics, expounded in their application to the Physiology of Health and Disease, and the Hygiene of Women and Children; Botany, with reference to Materia Medica and Pharmacy; and Anatomy, especially with reference to Women and Children.

## 2ND YEAR.

Physiology, Medicine, Chemistry, Pathology, Methods of Investigating Disease, Pharmacy and Dispensing.

*Physiology* and *Pathology* shall have special reference to the Organization of Women and Children, Pregnancy, and the History of Development.

*Pharmacy* is to have special attention devoted to it, as Female Students will be under the necessity of mixing their own Medicines, in villages where only small Druggists exist.

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\* The Committee are indebted to Miss FLORENCE LEES, for an English copy of the document, first given in German to Miss NIGHTINGALE by Dr. VON ARNETHE of Vienna. This document having been given in German to Miss NIGHTINGALE by Dr. VON ARNETHE, of Vienna, the Committee are indebted to Miss FLORENCE LEES for an English copy of it; and to Lord GRANVILLE for a copy of the original.

## 3RD YEAR.

Pathological Anatomy; Histology; Midwifery; the Teaching of the Diseases of Women and Children, will be taught from the beginning clinically; the Clinical Instruction (*klinika*) is confined to the most frequent forms of Disease.

In the Surgical *Clinic* the Pupils ought to make themselves acquainted with Fractures and Dislocations, also with Wounds, and the art of Bandaging. The study of Nervous Diseases, and those of the Eyes, is important; the first, with regard to the ailments of Women (*Gynæcology*): and the last, to those of Children.

## 4TH COURSE.

Operations in Midwifery; General practice in Midwifery; Hygiene; Clinical Diseases of Women and Children; Syphilitic and Skin Diseases.

Operative Midwifery must include, the use of Forceps, turning, &c., with practical training of the Students. The duty of an expert in Midwifery is confined to the explanation of questions of Forensic Medicine, referring to the female sex and their offspring, *e.g.* questions relating to Virginity, Seduction, Pregnancy, Miscarriage, the Capacity of Life of the Fœtus, was the Child born Alive or Dead, &c.—Hygiene is to be studied principally with regard to the health of the child after birth, and of the woman—

During the period of development.

During the period of pregnancy.

During parturition, and after the cessation of the monthly periods.

Each yearly course lasts eight months, beginning in the month of September and ending in May. The number of the Lectures may not consist of less than three a day.

From the establishment of this Course of Instruction the Russian Government anticipated the following results :—

- (1.) The lives of many Women in Childbirth would be spared, which were lost in Russia from inadequate Medical Attendance.
- (2.) The lives of many Children, and People of all ages, would be preserved among the lower orders, which are lost through Superstition and Prejudice.
- (3.) An efficient number of properly constituted Midwives would be spread over the country.
- (4.) Such a training would make Women very useful as Nurses in War, where they are needed ; not merely for Wounds, but the various Disorders which life in a camp engenders.
- (5.) If Women were properly educated in Medicine they would be useful in Druggists' Shops, &c., and thus the services of many men would be at the disposal of the State, whose places they could fill.

Such is the system in Russia, where so extended a course of Education may, from local circumstances, be assumed to be required by the wants of this country. The arrangements in Germany with respect to Midwives are part of the whole system of organization for State Medicine, of which an account is given in the Report to the Medical Council from the Committee on

State Medicine, July 1869. In Germany no one can act as a Midwife who has not had a Course of instruction as laid down by law; the Midwife is required to keep a register of the circumstances of every delivery, and is absolutely under the supervision of the District Health Officer. A manual\* for the instruction of Midwives is issued by a special commission appointed to prepare it. The regulations, therefore, aim at a complete supervision and official knowledge of the circumstances of every birth in the country.

In Great Britain there are several Schools of Midwifery at which women are trained. Such Schools exist in London, Edinburgh, and Dublin. In London, Queen Charlotte's Hospital, and—until lately King's College undertook special teaching of Midwives.

The Obstetrical Society is now attempting to induce Midwives to pass their Examination and receive their Diploma. This Diploma, however, is not a Licence sanctioned by law.

In Dublin, instruction is given in a systematic manner in connection with Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, also in the Rotunda Lying-in Hospital, and the Coombe Hospital. Certificates of competency are given to those who pass Examinations held under the direction of the Professor of Midwifery in the School of Physic, after attendance on women at their homes, and on lectures delivered thrice weekly. A manual for the instruction of Midwives has been prepared by Dr. CHURCHILL.† In addition to the Lectures on Midwifery, at the conclusion of the Course, Lectures

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\* "Preussisches Hebammen-Buch," Berlin. 3rd edition with plates, 1866.

† See Appendix VII. letter from Dr. SINCLAIR.

are given by PROFESSOR HAUGHTON to the Midwives, many of them being wives of soldiers,\* on Climate and Hygiene.

MISS NIGHTINGALE has examined into the deficiencies of the instruction in England, and has pressed the "organizing a Midwifery School of the highest efficiency in both science and practice;" adding "let no one think that real Midwifery Education can be less complete and thorough for a woman than it ought to be for a man. There must be, first, of course, the Lying-in Institution, the deliveries conducted by fully qualified head Midwives, of whom enough perhaps exist already for the purpose, who will give practical instruction to the pupil Midwives at the bedside. There must be a staff of Professors to give scientific instruction in Midwifery, but also in Anatomy, Physiology, and the like; in Pathology and Pathological branches; above all—in Sanitary Science and practice.†"

#### 2nd.—AS TO DISPENSING MEDICINES.

The relation of Dispensing to the wants especially of the rural districts has not yet attracted in this country adequate attention. The improvement which has taken place of late years in the Medical advice to the poor has not yet resulted in arrangements for conveniently providing them with medicines. The labour of preparing and dispensing medicines at his own house is still, in most places, imposed upon the Medical Officer; though in some cases Guardians of the Poor both give drugs and provide a Dispenser at

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\* See also letter from Professor Parkes. Appendix viii.

† See Notes on Lying-in Institutions by Florence Nightingale, 1871.—p. 105.

the Union, yet this excellent usage is infrequent, and the distance the poor traverse under this arrangement is often a heavy payment for the money value of the drug. In many villages there are now intelligent women trained in habits of accuracy in the management of the post and postal telegraphs. Would it not be convenient for the poor, that these offices, always situated at the most central spots, should be also the rural Dispensaries of the Local Government Board. They could be supervised by the District Medical Officer. Dr. GORDON, Deputy Inspector-General of Hospitals, observes (*Lessons in Hygiene and Surgery*, p. 36) that "one of the ablest and most conscientious dispensers he ever knew" was a lady of a religious order.

### 3rd.—AS TO NURSING.

1. The systematic training of nurses in Kaiserswerth are too well known to be more than alluded to.

In some parts of Germany, as at Carlsruhe, and in Hesse-Darmstadt, there are government regulations and opportunities for the instruction of trained nurses. There is theoretical and practical instruction. The former is given in lectures during the winter months; the latter, by training in the German Hospitals.

The lectures are partly physiological, partly practical; including instruction in cooking, and, generally, in the manifold duties of nursing, public and private.

Their training completed, they go up for an examination; and, if found worthy, receive a certificate to that effect.

2. Miss NIGHTINGALE, in a letter addressed to the Cubic Space Committee,\* and elsewhere, has discussed fully the importance of training Nurses and organizing the Nursing Staff of Workhouse and other Hospitals.

For a statement of Miss NIGHTINGALE's views on the training of Nurses, the Council is referred to the Report of the Cubic Space Committee, to a letter from H. BONHAM CARTER, Esq., printed in the Appendix,† and to her volume "Notes on Nursing."

#### IV.—RECOMMENDATIONS.

Your Committee have thought it desirable to present this slight sketch of the system existing in other countries.

They do not by any means propose to the Council to adopt arrangements which however necessary among other nations do not appear to be suited to the conditions of our own.

Nevertheless, they believe, that looking at the advancing wants of our increasing population, it is both expedient and practicable to pay more attention in this country than has hitherto been paid to the EDUCATION of Women to be

Midwives,

Dispensers, and

Superintendents of Nurses and of Medical  
Institutions.

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\* See Report of the Committee appointed to consider the Cubic Space of Metropolitan Workhouses, 1867.

† Appendix IX.

The Committee are further of opinion that if women have received a fitting Education in any or all of these three departments, they are justly entitled to a certificate of competency in one or all of them.

They recommend that the Committee be empowered :

*Firstly* — To enter into communication with any Public Institution in which there is provision for the Education and Examination of Women as

1. Midwives.
2. Dispensers.
3. Superintendents of Nurses and of Medical Institutions.

*Secondly*—To consider and report whether, and in what manner, a Public Register of persons obtaining the Qualifications named might be kept.

The Committee desire to impress upon the Council, that they do not, in this report, enter into the question of whether women should or should not have special education for ordinary medical or surgical practice, still less how that education, if any, is to be obtained. The Medical Council registers, of necessity, all such Diplomas when legally obtained. It would be bound to report to the Privy Council any Body which improperly conferred Medical and Surgical Diplomas on insufficient education.

The case now discussed by them is quite different from that of complete Medical and Surgical Education. It is, whether in the advance of population and civilisation a want has or has not been shown in the services for which women are specially adapted; and whether women when properly instructed, have that recognition, and that justice shown to them which they may rightly demand.

On this question, they, purposely with great brevity, now present their opinion. While they are aware that the Medical Council has no power to lay down what will entitle any one to be registered, otherwise than in the terms of Schedule A., of the Medical Act, they nevertheless consider it within the province of the Medical Council to issue a recommendation as to what would be desirable, for the benefit of the public, in the Education of Women as Midwives, Dispensers of Medicines, and Superintendents of Medical Institutions, and also as to the mode of registering their Qualifications.

The Committee, under these circumstances, are of opinion that in any future Bill for the amendment of the Medical Act, a clause should be introduced giving power to the Medical Council to register the Qualifications of Women acting as Midwives, Dispensers, and Superintendents of Medical Institutions. The register, they need hardly add, would be separate from the register of Practitioners of Medicine and Surgery.

In conclusion, the Committee would call the attention of the

Council to the following letter from the President of the Local Government Board :—

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

*March 21st, 1873.*

MY DEAR DR. ACLAND,

You are, I believe, the Chairman of a Committee appointed about a year ago by the General Council of Medical Education, to report upon the subjects of the granting of Certificates of Qualification by the Council to Women, in respect especially of Midwifery, the management of Medical Institutions, Dispensing, and Nursing.

My own opinion is, that the possibility of referring to such Certificates, and of relying upon them, would be a very considerable practical advantage in the administration of the Poor Law and Sanitary Acts in this country.

It would be of use to me, should you be able to tell me how soon the Report of your Committee is likely to be presented to, and to be considered by the Council.

Truly yours,

(Signed) J. STANSFELD.

The Committee recommend that a copy of this Report, when received by the Council be forwarded to the President of the Local Government Board.

In conclusion, the Committee suggest that should their recommendation now made be adopted, it would be desirable to reappoint the Committee for the purposes above indicated.

ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE,

H. W. ACLAND, *Chairman.*

## APPENDIX.

## I.

37, DAVIES STREET, LONDON, W.

*March 6th, 1873.*

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of February 20th, with its enclosure of Resolution of the General Council of Medical Education.

I am glad to hear that your Committee intends to proceed with the inquiry, for the continued legislation on Medical matters renders it obligatory that early action should be taken by which women qualified to act as Midwives shall be Registered, and be enabled to sign Certificates of Vaccination, and if the "Registration of Births and Deaths Bill" becomes law, Certificates of Still-birth.

I will forward a copy of the laws of the Obstetrical Association. No papers or report of its working have been printed; the Members have read original papers, referring chiefly to cases which have passed through their hands, and arrangements were recently made by which a Surgeon is giving, once a week, a Lecture on Anatomy and Physiology.

Some time ago the Council of the Association wrote to the Council of the College of Surgeons, concerning the better education of Midwives. A copy of that letter is forwarded. I believe it to be a fair expression of opinion on the part of Midwives generally, as to the teaching and Licences they desire.

I am not sufficiently acquainted with the question of a full Medical Education for Women to venture any remarks on the subject, personally. Were I wishful to become a general practitioner, I should anxiously

desire the same education and examination as accorded to Men ; but, in some branches, separate from them so far as classes are concerned.

The Midwifery Licence for Women should be obtained from some corporate body, and be equal in value to that at present granted by any of the recognised Boards.

Doubtless the Pharmaceutical Society would be willing to certify women as dispensers, whilst the certificates concerning the management of medical institutions and nursing, would be most reasonably given by the physicians and matrons of hospitals where students of this class would be trained.

The great want is more theoretical teaching, especially with regard to the application of practical knowledge. Few nurses, nor indeed matrons, know *why* they perform certain duties ; they lead busy lives, with little or no opportunity for quiet thought, and attend to their work in so routine and mechanical a manner, that as they grow older instead of becoming more skilful, they are really less so, because they fear to yield credence to scientific modes of action, or to give up old customs.

Another great injury to nurses is the fashion of gathering them into "Institutions," where they are paid small salaries, whilst their large earnings go to maintain the proprietor of the "Institution;" or where the earnings of nurses who work in private families are used to send nurses amongst the poor, an injustice which would only be paralleled if medical officers were asked to give up half of each fee to the support of hospitals.

I remain, SIR,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) MARIA FIRTH.

Dr. ACLAND,

*Chairman of Committee of Medical Council  
on the Medical Education of Women.*

## II.

ON THE LICENSING OF MIDWIVES. PROPOSED  
BY THE OBSTETRICAL SOCIETY—

That the Medical Council should be empowered to Licence any person as a Licentiate in Midwifery for a year, and to renew such Licence annually upon the attestation of the London Obstetrical Society, or other approved Examining Body, to the effect that the Candidate bears a good moral character, and is respectable in conduct; and—

Has had an opportunity of learning the art of Midwifery:—

- (a) By attending a Course of Instruction satisfactory to the Medical Council.
- (b) By attending labours in company with persons nominated by the Society as skilled in Midwifery, who certify the practical competency of the Candidate.
- (c) By passing a satisfactory Examination in the theory and practice of Midwifery.

That the Licence be annually renewed without further Examination, upon attestation satisfactory to the Medical Council that the Licentiate continues to bear a good character for morality, and respectability of conduct, and has not been guilty of carelessness or malpractice endangering the life of any mother or child under her care.

The Medical Council shall publish annually a list of the Licentiates in Midwifery whose Licences have been renewed; and also of those whose Licences have not been renewed, with statement of the reason for such non-renewal.

That the fee for such Licence, and for each renewal thereof, shall not exceed (2s. 6d.)

That any person assuming the title of Licentiate in Midwifery without Licence, obtained or renewed within the preceeding twelve months, shall, on summary conviction, forfeit and pay any penalty not exceeding ten pounds.

## III.

MEMORIAL FROM THE OBSTETRICAL ASSOCIATION TO THE  
PRESIDENT AND COUNCIL OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE  
OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND.

GENTLEMEN,

I am requested by the Council of the Obstetrical Association of Midwives to solicit the attention of the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons of England to the present unsatisfactory condition of Midwives, from the want of an examination as to professional knowledge, and to the increased disabilities under which they will be placed by the proposed legislation in the "Registration of Births Bill," and respectfully to inquire whether there is any possibility of the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons granting a Certificate or Licence in Midwifery, which would place Midwives in a position rightfully to fulfil the duties they are called upon to perform.

The Council of the Obstetrical Association assumes that it will be admitted that this class of practitioners has always existed, and must continue to exist, in order to meet the requirements of society.

It is proposed to establish an hospital where women may receive from properly authorised teachers, such instruction in Anatomy, Physiology, Hygiene, and Medicine, as may be considered requisite, and that practical instruction in Midwifery shall be obtained in the Lying-in Hospitals, or in the out-door departments of those hospitals.

Before, however, commencing the work of establishing such an institution, the Council of the Obstetrical Association desires to know, for the guidance of those who will carry out this plan—

- 1st. Whether the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons would think favourably of granting a Certificate or Licence of Midwifery to Midwives.
- 2nd. Whether the Council would specify the length of the term of instruction through which the Midwives would be required to pass, and the particular subjects to be taken up before they could be admitted to examination.

- 3rd. Whether the Council of the Obstetrical Association could be favoured with any intimation of the character of the examination Midwives would be required to undergo.
- 4th. Whether any preliminary examination in general education would be imperative.
- 5th. Whether any exceptional arrangements could be made to admit Midwives at present in practice to the examination in Midwifery.
- 6th. The number of beds it would be requisite to have in the proposed hospital.

The Council of the Obstetrical Association being thus desirous of aiding in the establishment of a class of properly educated Midwives, who would hold a legally authorised Certificate to practice, begs to express the hope that the Council of the Royal College of Surgeons will not be disinclined to facilitate the formation of such a body of indispensable practitioners.

I have the honour to remain, GENTLEMEN,

Your obedient Servant,

(Signed) MARIA FIRTH.

*N.B.—The above Memorial has not been favourably received by the Royal College of Surgeons, as that body does not propose to alter its existing regulations in respect of Midwifery. (H. W. A.) March 20th, 1873.*

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#### IV.

#### TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF MEDICAL EDUCATION AND REGISTRATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

The MEMORIAL of the undersigned Women sheweth:—

That very great danger daily is encountered by parturient women, and that there frequently occurs loss of the lives of both Mothers and Children, in consequence of the attendance of

unskilled women on cases of labour; and the action of the Council in appointing an enquiry into this matter has proved that the fact is regretfully recognised by them.

That this danger and loss will certainly continue till educated women are provided and differentiated from these ignorant persons; because women who wish to receive the attendance of Midwives cannot be deterred from doing so by the existence of danger which it requires a professional education to appreciate, while they would readily perceive, and take advantage of the security afforded by employing legally registered practitioners.

That the only way to provide and differentiate educated from ignorant women is by the establishment of a full examination in Scientific Midwifery; the passing of which shall entitle to a degree, with a style and title which it shall be unlawful for anyone to assume who has not passed the said examination.

That the Memorialists have gratefully seen that the attention of the Council has been directed to this important point; and they beg most respectfully to thank you for the step taken upon this matter at your last Meeting. And they humbly pray that your Hon. Board will recommend the speedy institution of a complete and searching examination (at which they wish to present themselves) of such a character as will justify the granting of a legal degree, certifying that the holder is qualified for the full practice of Midwifery.

FLORENCE FENWICK MILLER,  
59, Francis Terrace,  
Victoria Park Road, E.

ALICE VICKERY,  
333, Camberwell Road, S.E.

HELENA PAULINE DOWNING,  
5, Lonsdale Square, W.

EMMA HILLER,  
Steele Road, Haverstock Hill, N.W.

*Accoucheuses.*

## V.

*Extracts from a Letter addressed to the CHAIRMAN, by a Midwife.*

"But the chief reason for my troubling you with this letter is to beg of you to use your influence to obtain for women a *full and searching* examination in the whole compass of the Practice of Midwifery. Indeed, Sir, such an examination as that instituted by the Obstetrical Society is, practically, good for nothing."

"It has been said that to give women this thorough examination, and to certify that they are theoretically able to do anything, will cause them to attempt to perform operations for which they are practically unfitted. Gentlemen who say so are unjust to us. A young general practitioner would not think of performing any serious operation, without a consultation, unless he were possessed of an alarming amount of self-confidence; neither would a young woman practitioner of Midwifery."

"Gentlemen who use this assumption assume that women are more self-confident and presuming, less willing to acknowledge superiority, less able to judge of their own power and want of power—than are men. But the onus of proof lies upon these gentlemen, and I do not think they can manage it. I am sure women are not so weak and foolish as to imagine they can do everything. But with uneducated, or half-educated Midwives, there is, indeed, just this danger—they either do not comprehend at all, or do not appreciate, difficulties when they meet them."

"A thoroughly educated woman, understanding the wonderful mechanism of the physiological process over which she is watching, will be ever careful to guard against any symptom of danger; and in those cases requiring extraordinary skill and discretion she will be only too happy to receive the counsel and direction of an eminent and accomplished man."

"I do honestly believe that a full examination will produce a class of women who, while ever ready to treat instant emergencies, instead of screaming for a doctor while the patient dies, will yet be able to understand and acknowledge what they can and what they cannot do."

"The charges, then, which I have to bring against such an examination as that set up by the Obstetrical Society are :—1st, That it will not fulfil the object of differentiating the educated and ignorant ; 2nd, That it will hardly raise the standard of Midwives' education at all ; 3rd, That it will produce a race of fool-hardy, self-conceited, yet incompetent Midwives ; and, 4th, That such an examination can never be permitted to give the privileges, so far as Midwifery is concerned, to those who pass, which registration gives for the whole practice of medicine."

## VI.

### *Extract from a Letter of DR. AVELING.*

"Sixty per cent. of the poor women in villages and manufacturing towns are attended in their confinements by *Midwives*, uninstructed and uncontrolled (probably 10,000 in number). The fatal results to both mothers and children, arising from the ignorance of these Midwives, is notorious. It is granted by all that this state of matters must be remedied. There are but two ways of doing it; either to annihilate the whole race, or to instruct them. Unless this is done, it is useless to provide for their examination, licensing, registration, and supervision. Midwifery Schools must be established in London and other large towns. Individuals, Physicians of Lying-in Hospitals, the Obstetrical College for Women, and the Obstetrical Society of London, are now granting Licences; but none of them are of a sufficiently authoritative character. That of the Obstetrical Society is the best, but Midwives cannot be expected to come from all parts of the kingdom to be examined. Boards should be appointed wherever Midwifery Schools are established."

"I think, also, that the Licence granted to a Midwife should be registrable. Perhaps this might involve the construction of a Supplementary Register; but the object of the Licence would be very much defeated were this not done."

"I also feel strongly that Midwives should be under the supervision of Inspectors, as is the case in Prussia and other countries."

## VII.

49, UPPER MOUNT STREET,

DUBLIN, *March*, 1873.

MY DEAR DR. STOKES,

At your request, I have much pleasure in furnishing you with all the information I can, relative to the Education of Midwives, and ladies' nurse-tenders, as carried out at Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital maternity.

Upon my appointment as King's Professor of Midwifery, in the School of Physic of Trinity College, towards the end of 1868, at my own suggestion, I was entrusted with the formation of a Midwifery Department in connection with Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital.

With the warm co-operation of the Board of the Hospital, and the more immediate, active and cordial assistance of my friend, The Rev. Professor HAUGHTON, one of that body, the "maternity" for the attendance of lying-in women *at their homes*, was established almost immediately after I had obtained the King's Chair.

More than ordinary success attended our efforts; the deliveries soon reached to the number of 500 per annum, and are now steadily increasing.

A ward was appropriated in the Hospital for the reception of those labouring under the diseases peculiar to women; and thus a perfect School of Obstetric Medicine and Surgery existed, for the advantage of such of the Pupils of the School of Physic as wished to avail themselves of it.

Upon the formation of the maternity, I immediately set about the creation of a female class, and, since its establishment up to the present date, nearly 230 women have received a sound education, theoretically and practically, as Midwives and ladies' nurse-tenders.

Our male class is not large at present, but is steadily increasing ; but our female class numbers, on an average, 40 women ; thus nearly all the business of our Maternity is carried on by females.

A careful registration has been kept, from the commencement, of all the women who have obtained diplomas. The registry is under the charge of the Registrar of the Hospital, and in it is entered the name of the pupil, the date upon which she joined, also that of her final examination, and the number of her diploma.

The Board of the Hospital, on the establishment of the Maternity, built a "Maternity-house," as it is called, within the precincts of the Hospital, in which reside the Head Midwives—two of them,—paid and permanent officers of the Institution. Here are a dispensary which is open daily, and also the Head Midwives' office, where she is obliged to attend for certain hours each day, to distribute to all whose circumstances render them deserving objects, tickets for home attendance. No recommendation is required, poverty or limited circumstances entitles them to demand our aid. The form of ticket is attached (Form No. 1), the block of which is retained in the "book," being a counterpart of the ticket which is torn off and given to the applicant. The production of this ticket, at the gates, at any hour of the day or night, ensures a speedy attendance at the patient's home. Any case of emergency, however, is paid equal attention to even though no ticket be produced. By this system an opportunity is afforded of seeing most of our patients some time prior to their confinement, and of treating them medically, before their time, should they require it.

Now with respect to our two Head Midwives, I educated them both myself, and they are such proficient in their profession, that I have no need of other assistants, in fact, they *are* my assistants. Except the serious operations in Midwifery, they are capable of performing any act that could be required of them, and are just as expert as myself in the delivery of *nates* presentations. They are superior to the ordinary class of Midwives both in their general and their special education ; each is equal to a "Boivin." I attach a code of Regulations I have formed for their guidance (Form No. 2).

The female class is divided into squads, and thus told off for duty. The names are placed upon a roster, a copy of which hangs in their waiting room, a duplicate in the Head Midwives' department, and a triplicate is in my possession (*see* Form No. 3).

I also attach the Regulations I have formed for the guidance of the Female Class (*see* Form No. 4).

The method of teaching may be gathered, to a certain extent, by the perusal of Forms 2 and 4.

Each pupil, except she be at a case, must attend my lectures three times a week, which lectures are delivered in the theatre of the hospital. These lectures are illustrated by the same drawings, models, and preparations as are used in Trinity College (School of Physic).

In as homely a way as possible, the women are first taught a few necessary facts in popular anatomy and physiology.

The pelvis is most minutely lectured and demonstrated upon, its coverings, and its contents; this is most carefully attended to. The parts of the foetus are described especially with regard to determining presentations. The touch is practised under cover. The mechanism of the three stages of labour is popularly explained.

Signs and symptoms of pregnancy are taught and the mode of detecting pregnancy short of auscultation.

Natural labour is most minutely entered into; and dwelt upon, until, by repeated examinations, it has become certain that *every pupil is thoroughly acquainted with the subject.*

Preternatural labours; means of diagnosis in. — What to do during the absence of the physician, and how to assist him when he arrives. All are taught how to deliver a simple case of *nates* presentations.

Tedious labour, its nature and dangers; when to send for assistance, and how to treat the case till assistance arrives. Operations are described, so far as to inculcate the duties of the Midwife during and after such Complex labours are carefully explained. Treatment of plural births. Each variety of hæmorrhage connected with labour, and how to arrest blood-flow in each. Every woman is taught to plug, *and when to plug*; and <sup>I</sup> may here state, that in consequence of such teaching I have not

yet lost a case of *placenta prævia*.\* The treatment of hæmorrhage during the placental stage and after delivery, and in connection with abortion. Puerperal convulsion is lectured upon—when to expect such a complication, and how to prevent it by treatment; also, how to attend a case of convulsions. Prolapse of the funis, and the simple means of returning it. The symptoms of, and how to act, during threatened or absolute rupture of the uterus; so that no time may be lost, in the efforts to save life, till assistance arrives.

Retained placenta, and how to act in, most carefully, are these women taught; how to nurse and tend during convalescence, after simple, tedious, and complex deliveries, and also in cases of Childbed Fevers, &c.; how to watch for dangerous symptoms, and how to meet such till the attendant arrives; the treatment of the newborn child; feeding, &c.

Towards the end of each session my friend, the Rev. Professor HAUGHTON, delivers a few lectures upon Climate (more especially relating to the stations of the British Army), Air, Water, Food, and Clothing. I need scarcely say, that the women get practical instruction in surgery, the manufacture of drinks and light nutriment, and the hygiene of the sick-room.

Public examinations are frequently held during the session. No woman is permitted to present herself for her final examination until she has completed her term of six months, and attended at least twenty cases of labour. Few are satisfied with twenty cases, the majority attend thirty-five to forty, and some as many as sixty during their term.

The Midwives have to see their patient daily till she is quite well and capable of performing her ordinary duties, to dress her infant and herself, look after the personal comfort of each, and their diet, and report daily (*vide* Forms 2 & 3).

At the termination of their six months they undergo a public examination in the theatre of the Hospital, and receive a diploma, a copy of which I have sent you, signed by the Registrar of the Hospital and myself, and formally granted, on my recommendation, by the Hospital Board.

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\* N.B.—Five cases in the Maternity since its formation

The best answerers receive medals. Two or three bronze medals are given each session, and to the best of all, a handsome silver one. These medals are the gift of The Rev. Professor HAUGHTON. The Board of the University allow ten pounds each session to be distributed amongst the most deserving.

The Midwives, who are not the wives of Soldiers, support themselves during their term of Pupilage in lodgings near the Hospital, and pay a fee of £5 for their Tuition.

Perhaps the most interesting feature in connection with the Maternity of Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, is the Army Midwives' Class \* The Army and Civilian Class are, however, instructed together.

Having served for a short time in the Army as an Assistant Surgeon, both on the Staff and in the Royal Scots Regiment, I was of course thoroughly acquainted with the Medical and Surgical requirements of the service, and the want of fitting attendance upon the wives of our soldiers during their labours was often forced upon my attention. It struck me that in Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital Maternity, I could be of some use to a service, in which, when commencing my career, I took such pleasure and interest, I accordingly offered my gratuitous services to H.R.H. the Field Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, and to the Director-General of the Army, Medical Department—to form a class for the Education of two or more women from every Regiment quartered, from time to time, in Ireland; who, upon their having been made expert and efficient midwives, could return to their Regiments and serve as such therein. My offer was accepted, and quarters were set apart for the reception of the intended Pupils. Women, upon the recommendation of the Commanding Officer and Surgeon of each Regiment in Ireland, were sent to me to educate, and the result has been most gratifying. I append a list of Army Midwives I have educated since the formation of this Class. About 30 are at present under training, and will be ready for service in or about July next. These will be immediately succeeded by a new Class.

I feel conscious that much has been done to advance the School of Physic of the University, by the formation of this School of Obstetrics, but much more in conducting to the public good.

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\* Formed a few months after my appointment to the King's Professorship.

It is true the work has been performed strictly and unobtrusively ; but, nevertheless, it has been a very great and laborious one.

I am,

MY DEAR Dr. STOKES,

With much respect,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) E. B. SINCLAIR.

To WM. STOKES, ESQ., M.D.,

*Regius Prof. of Med., Univ. Dubl.*

### VIII.

*Statement as to Midwives in the Army, by PROFESSOR PARKES, F.R.S.*

“ A supply of competent Midwives to attend the wives of soldiers during confinement, is obtained in two ways—

I. “ The Professor of Midwifery in St. Patrick Dun’s Hospital, in Dublin, trains all women who apply for instruction in Ireland. This is sanctioned by Government, but the action is purely voluntary on the part of the Professor of Midwifery, who receives no payment for this service. He examines the Midwives, and grants Certificates, and these Certificates are taken as Qualifications by the Army Medical Department to attend soldiers’ wives.

II. “ At each Female Hospital at the Military Stations in the United Kingdom, the Medical Officers in charge, train soldier’s wives as Midwives. After being trained, these women are examined practically *vivâ voce* by medical officers. These examination papers are sent to the office of the Army Medical Department, and, if satisfactory, certificates of proficiency are granted to the women.

Every year, about forty to fifty women get certificates from both sources. The Army is supplied in this way, and no complaints of deficiency reach the Army Medical Department.

The trained Midwives are not paid by Government, but by the women they attend. In many regiments there are special regulations for them made by the commanding officer.

## IX.

91, GLOUCESTER TERRACE, HYDE PARK, W.,

March 1872.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am obliged by your note of the 12th, enclosing printed Resolutions of the Medical Council respecting the Special Education of Women. You say that your idea is, that the Medical Council might publish in the *Medical Register* the Institutions that are recognized as proper to give Certificates for certain Qualifications.

You are aware, that under the plan of Training pursued by the Nightingale Fund Committee at St. Thomas's Hospital, a Register is kept of those Nurses who have satisfactorily completed the prescribed course of Training (one year), and they are then recommended for employment.

The Nurses so Registered are said to be "Certified;" but we do not, in fact, give them any Document in the nature of a Certificate. We have found by experience (extending now over 11 years) that it would not answer to grant Certificates to all who pass, because the course of Training does not suffice to exhibit all the qualifications in many women; and subsequent experience of them in a responsible situation as "full" Nurse, or in a superior position, is essential to test or to develop certain qualities. A Certificate granted at the close of the period of Training would, in a large proportion of cases, be very misleading.

The Certificate, too, would, we consider, have a bad effect upon many of the women, increasing the strong tendency to self-conceit, inducing them to consider that they had attained all the requisite skill and knowledge, and causing a gradual relapse into inefficiency. This is even now a not uncommon result of the Training, when the women are afterwards left too much to themselves.

We find that the efficiency of a Nurse requires to be constantly kept up by persistent and strict discipline and supervision.

Undoubtedly there are many Nurses to whom, after a subsequent period of service, Certificates might be safely awarded, but there would be considerable difficulty in drawing the line, and I consider on the whole that the public are better protected, and the qualified Nurse

is as much benefitted by the plan we adopt, of withholding the formal testimonial, and retaining the power of recommendation in our own hands.

I think that there is a wide difference in the application of a system of Registration and Certificate to Nurses and to Medical Students, so that no parallel can be fairly drawn between the two cases.

Then with regard to the Institutions which are to grant the Certificates, there would, it seems to me, be very great difficulty in determining their competency to afford an efficient Training, for that is what they must be able to do.

The fitness of the Institution depends so much upon the character of the management and supervision for the time—I may say upon the personal qualifications of the female superintendent—that with even a good system, which I fear scarcely exists anywhere, the quality of the training would vary very materially with a change of the kind referred to. It would, I think, be impracticable to exclude many Institutions, which having conformed to certain regulations would have a claim to be Registered, and yet might be wholly incompetent to the work.

The capacity to train cannot, in fact, be ascertained by mere Inspection and Examination, just as the qualifications of the Nurses cannot be tested by mere Examination; this being so, I fear the Medical Council would involve itself in a sea of trouble by attempting to determine what Institutions are to be recognized.

All of those who are interested in this subject ought, I am sure, to be much indebted to you for bringing it forward for consideration and discussion; that will, at any rate, have a beneficial effect; but I venture to think that, in the present condition of knowledge (or ignorance) which exists with regard to the proper system of training, and the very defective means of training at all, *the time is not yet ripe for action on the part of the Council.*

Believe me, DEAR SIR,

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) HENRY BONHAM CARTER.

HY. W. ACLAND, Esq., M.D., F.R.S.





