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"QUI NON PROFICIT, DEFICIT."

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EDITORIAL.

NURSING EDUCATION.—III.

DURING the last fortnight, our consideration of the suggestion that Nurses should pay for their training, as pupils in every other skilled calling are compelled to defray the cost of their education, has led us to the conclusions that such a course would be not only theoretically possible, but would be probably followed by certain very definite advantages. For example, the argument seems valid that if every Probationer was obliged to pay a premium to her Hospital for teaching her the principles of Nursing, there would be fewer applicants for training than there are at present, and that the general social position of those who entered the calling would be also higher on the average than it now is—the quality of the workers, in fact, would probably increase as their quantity diminished.

But then we are met at once with the natural inquiry put by Lord SANDHURST to Mrs. BEDFORD FENWICK at the Select Committee of the House of Lords: "Do you think that the supply of those people who would be willing to pay and give their time would be equal to the demand?" Mrs. FENWICK replied that she quite thought so, and

gave very sufficient reasons for her belief in the large number of applications she received each year when Matron of St. Bartholomew's. We are thoroughly inclined to agree with her, but upon other grounds. It is a fact which has been proved again and again, that the more stringent the admission to a profession is made, the better position, therefore, which its workers hold in public estimation, the higher will be the class of those who desire to enter its portals. And it must be also remembered that for some years past this principle of paying for Nursing education has been widely recognised, and that many hundreds each year now enter our Hospitals for longer or shorter terms as paying Probationers. All that is necessary, indeed, is that what has hitherto been the exception should be made the rule, and that all learners in future should pay for their entire course of training. Judging by analogy and experience, we believe that it would be found that the demand for Nursing Studentships would soon exceed the possible vacancies at the great London and provincial Hospitals, and then the smaller Institutions would be able as now to obtain as many pupils as they desired.

Because the one essential difference which exists between a Nursing and a Medical School must be borne in mind. In the former, all the pupils must of necessity be resident in the Hospital. In the latter, although there are many Residential Colleges, yet there is no imperative need for the students to be always within reach, and consequently the great majority of them live where they please, and, unless they are University undergraduates, are subject to no control outside the Hospital. Consequently, whereas a Medical School can admit an unlimited number of learners, the number of Nursing Probationers at each Hospital must be strictly limited by the amount of its bedroom accommodation.

But now, presuming that the system was inaugurated, and so successfully that every available vacancy was filled by a Nursing Student, let us see how the plan would work out in practice

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