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**Editorial.**

**THE ORIGIN OF REFORM MOVEMENTS.**

The announcement that the first annual meeting of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses is fixed for May 8th—a date which we hope all members and friends of the Society will note, and keep free—draws attention to the fact that it has now existed for a year. In that year it has certainly justified its existence, and proved the desirability of organisation for the sole object of obtaining an Act of Parliament providing for the Registration of Nurses.

We are now proving the benefit of the lessons of the past, one of which is unquestionably that we must only expect, to a limited extent, the active support of the Matrons of hospitals in working for this reform. There are not a few exceptions to this statement. There are names of Matrons which in this connection will be handed down with all honour to posterity, but there are many others who have shirked the odium inseparable from the contentious stage of a reform movement, and have preferred to stand aside and wait "until the time has come" when it is politic to take action—in other words, until other people have done the work. This attitude, although regrettable, need not surprise or dishearten us; indeed, the occasion for surprise would be if those who have attained to high places adopted any other course.

It is most rare to find any reform measure initiated or at first supported by those in power. There seems to be something in the atmosphere which surrounds those who are in possession of official appointments which obstructs their view of the path of progress. And so reform has usually been initiated by those free from official restrictions, has been fostered and developed by the work of the rank and file, until, finally, the overwhelming pressure of educated public opinion has at last swept away the obstructive barriers,

behind which, in the security of high places, the opposition has remained entrenched.

Thus, as the General Practitioner has felt the pinch of non-representation on the General Medical Council, and has wrung from it the right to a limited amount of direct representation, so it is primarily nurses who have left their training-schools after graduation to take up private nursing, or other work, who find themselves face to face with the difficulties which confront them as unorganised workers, who realise the injustice of being required to work on an equality, and for equal fees, with women with the most rudimentary training, whose careless and ignorant work may render useless the care and devotion which they have lavished on a patient.

It is the private nurse, again, who is brought face to face with the unnecessary sufferings of the sick, caused by the lack of the enforcement of any minimum standard of education for a trained nurse, who knows that the rich, who pay full fees for the services of nurses, often receive attention so indifferent that it would not for a moment be tolerated in the wards of a well-organised hospital, and she it is who is consequently inspired with the desire to obtain some measure for the protection of the public from unqualified attendants rather than the hospital Matron, who regards with justifiable complacency the well-organised wards of the institution with which she is connected, and finds it difficult to realise that matters are as bad as she is asked to believe in the nursing world outside.

The work, therefore, which lies immediately before us is the education of the public in the need for the Registration of Nurses, and the risks to which they are subjected until this is accomplished. To this end it is desirable to obtain a public inquiry by a Select Committee of the House of Commons into the whole nursing question. By no other means can the case for a Bill be placed before the country in so concrete a form; and, further, it is the usual preliminary to active legislation.

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