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Editorial.

THE POLICY OF INTIMIDATION.

As the movement for nursing organisation gathers in intensity the forces ranged in opposition are increasingly in evidence. They are, of course, ranged under the banner of Sir Henry Burdett, who for the last quarter of a century has posed as a self-appointed dictator on nursing matters, presumably on the strength of having held for a few years the position of secretary in a provincial hospital. Knowing well that if once nurses are organised on self-governing lines into a strong, self-respecting profession his dictatorship will be at an end, his policy has always been to prevent any co-operative movement which he cannot control, as anyone who takes the trouble to read the back numbers of the *Hospital* newspaper will realise. His vulgar intimidation and persecution of the British Nurses' Association until he managed to manipulate it through certain of the weaker vessels, his attempt to stir up strife in the Nurses' Co-operation, and his terror of the State Registration movement, as evidenced by the animus persistently expressed against it, are an everlasting reflection upon his journalistic methods and upon the attitude adopted by a certain type of man towards women and women's movements.

Once more his fear of an Association of Nurses organised on a professional basis has found expression in his savage onslaught in last week's *Hospital* upon the Matrons' Council, a Society which, from the first, has been most distasteful to Sir Henry Burdett and come under the ban of his displeasure. His policy has, therefore, been to depreciate its work and to belittle its status. But, Sir Henry Burdett notwithstanding, the fact remains that the Matrons' Council is the only Society of Superintendents in this country which has had the courage to state publicly the purposes for

which it is associated and to work for them. The success which has attended its efforts is evidenced by the animus expressed against it by Sir Henry Burdett *et hoc genus omne*.

It is important to realise that evolution has brought the nursing world in this country to the parting of the ways, and it must now choose which it will take. If nurses allow themselves to be manipulated by professional philanthropists, they must take a position of subserviency and toadyism, submit to charitable patronage, and resign their professional ideals. The other path leads along the road of self-respect to the organisation of nursing on a professional basis, to the enforcement of adequate educational standards, including the organisation of preliminary, clinical, and post-graduate schools, and to fair and just industrial conditions. All that nurses following this path ask is that they shall be left to work out their own salvation, which will assuredly be effected along these, and no other lines.

In our opinion Sir Henry Burdett, in attempting to stem the tide of nursing evolution, has, in the expressive vernacular of our transatlantic cousins, "chewed off more than he can chew." All over the world professional co-operation is proceeding apace. In our own Colonies and in America the support and sympathy of the leaders of the medical profession and the governors of nurse-training schools is accorded to those nurses who are effecting their organisation on self-governing lines, while at home almost every post brings us welcome evidence that the desire for sisterly co-operation amongst nurses exists all over the country. The opponents of progress may hope that they have stopped the Registration movement, but it takes more than their methods to kill the indomitable spirit of self-respect which still characterises the best British nurses, and which can never be crushed by cowardice and injustice.

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