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Editorial.

UPHILL WORK.

The organisation of the nursing profession seems at first simple. We nurses know so well what we need, what the public need, if an efficient nursing service is to be secured to them. Fundamentally, we want a minimum standard of nursing education and the hall marking of those who attain it by giving them the right to describe themselves as trained nurses, and by placing their names on a State Register. When once this foundation is laid, then we can begin to build upon it.

It is all so simple, so obviously necessary, plainly the only basis for future progress. Yet to attain what we want seems inexplicably hard to those who have not well considered the matter.

Those who have studied it most deeply understand best the many issues which are involved, and that the question which seems so simple is, in reality, complex. Thus, Miss Lavinia L. Dock, one of the most esteemed and brilliant thinkers in our profession, writes:—"Since I realise how closely all our organisation work is related to the whole cause of general emancipation, I not only find it much more absorbing, but also much more natural that it should be uphill work." But for this very reason—namely, its difficulty by reason of the issues involved—the work of organisation should appeal to all that is best in us as a cause worthy of self-sacrifice. It is round the flag in the thickest fight that the greatest deeds of valour are performed; it is precisely the point where the battle is hottest which attracts the bravest spirits.

But, let us make no mistake. Great victories, involving big issues, are not won without sacrifices, and it depends largely upon how much we are willing to subordinate our own personal well-being to the general good whether we shall have the joy of seeing our profession

properly organised, or whether the present chaos shall continue, with loss of dignity to nurses as a whole, and with daily danger to the sick. Each age has its own special duty. The organisation of the work in our training-schools is now largely a matter of history; it has been achieved as the result of self-sacrifice and heroism on the part of pioneer workers whose names we shall honour for all time. The history of their work stirs our blood, and urges all that is best in us to further achievement. And the work of our own generation is the organisation of our profession outside the training-schools, of the increasingly large number of nurses who, when once they have gained their certificates and left their well-organised schools, find no body charged with guarding their interests or of maintaining discipline in their ranks. It lies with ourselves to decide whether we intend to take the helm at this crisis, to show that we recognise our responsibility to further our professional ideals and the public welfare, whether, in short, we prove ourselves a force to be recognised and consulted.

If the nurses of this generation have sufficient forcefulness to obtain reforms which in their effects will be more far-reaching than any yet achieved, they will show themselves worthy successors of those gone before. But "all progress is strife to the end," and it is certain we shall not carry measures involving not only our own, but, indirectly, general emancipation, without a struggle. There are few women who really enjoy a fight, and we must count the cost before we embark upon it. Once entered upon we cannot rest content until we have levelled the wall which at present stands between us and future progress, and, by the way of State Registration, have secured an entrance to the promised land of our hopes, a land not of rest but of fresh endeavour, where, however, we shall work under conditions which promise to be fruitful in good results.

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