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## Editorial.

### A BLESSING IN DISGUISE.

"Go and look behind the Ranges."

The outburst of condemnation of the proposal by the Local Government Board to certify women trained for one year in minor training-schools in workhouse wards as "qualified" has been unanimous throughout the nursing world. It is felt that the issue of such a certificate, under the authority of a Government Department, would not only be, as Dr. Savill asserted at the meeting held at St. Thomas's Hospital on Thursday in last week, "an insult and injury to nurses properly trained," but it would also be a source of injury to the sick throughout the country. The public protest made by all sections of the nursing world has consequently been strong and unmistakable.

But is the Departmental Committee of the Local Government Board primarily to blame for the recommendation which all agree in condemning? We think not; surely we must place the blame on the right shoulders—our own. Had the nursing profession been united in its demand for that legal status, that defined minimum standard of education for which some of us have been pleading and working for the last fifteen years, the Departmental Committee to inquire into the Nursing of the Sick Poor in Workhouses would never have been heard of, for long ago the workhouse nursing difficulty would have been dealt with by a nursing department formed at the Local Government Board offices in which experienced superintendents of nursing would have had adequate representation.

Yet further, the fundamental responsibility for this ill-advised recommendation rests with those hospital authorities who are entrusted with the education of trained nurses, and who have so far failed to realise their responsibility to the public at large. It is certainly incumbent on them, in the public interest, to agree as to a minimum standard of nursing efficiency to be accepted by all. Yet we need go no

further than the twelve large training-schools of the metropolis, with medical schools attached, to find that certificates of training are still given to nurses at the end of the varying periods of twelve months, two years, three years, and four years. Is it any wonder that, when such diversities exist in our leading training-schools, a committee of laymen should be at fault when attempting to define a minimum standard?

A difficulty in the past has been that members of hospital committees, which are the bodies dealing with nursing education, have for the most part had but slight expert knowledge of this department of their work, and have not studied the evolution of nursing, or the needs of trained nurses; therefore it is not a matter for surprise that they have failed to appreciate the fact that their responsibilities as educational authorities extend far beyond the walls of their own institutions, or that in the common interest concerted action is necessary.

The Matrons' Council for the last ten years has bravely endeavoured to form public opinion as to the need for "a uniform system of education, examination, certification, and State Registration for Nurses in British hospitals." It has ploughed its lonely furrow in spite of many adverse influences, and has prepared the soil for the seed now ready to germinate. Within its circumscribed sphere of action its work has been solid and good, and is worthy of all honour. But it has always recognised the need of combined action on the part not only of a section, but of the whole nursing profession.

A hopeful augury for the future is the formation of Nurses' Leagues, in which the rank and file of graduate nurses learn to appreciate their public duties and the value of co-operation. Those Matrons who have helped the nurses connected with various training-schools thus to co-operate have done valuable service to the community at large. In short, we cannot but feel that those who have had the courage to explore behind the mountain ranges of difficulties,

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