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Editorial.

A COWARDLY ATTEMPT AT INTIMIDATION.

It is not surprising that deep indignation has been expressed at the scurrilous editorial article in Sir Henry Burdett's newspaper last week on the Registration question, in which he purposely misrepresents the situation, and viciously attacks those women who are attempting to obtain by legislation the organisation of their profession and the protection of the public from dangerously incompetent attendants.

Those, however, who have followed the history of the organisation movement in this country know that Sir Henry Burdett is only carrying out the tactics which he has adopted since 1887 in this connection, and which, indeed, it is his practice to adopt towards those whom he desires to control but who refuse to submit to his dictation. Those who are not so well acquainted with nursing history would do well to study the early numbers of the *Hospital* newspaper. They will find that when the British Nurses' Association was first founded its editor left no stone unturned to injure this young Society. Failing the possibility of wrecking it, he proceeded to throw mud at its members, describing them as joining it to obtain "pseudo-respectability," and as "the scum of the nursing profession," and in one case accusing a member, by name, of theft. When it was made plain to him that the member in question was not the woman who had committed the theft, he characteristically offered no apology either to the nurse or to the Association which he had maligned.

When the Matrons' Council was founded, the columns of his paper were once more opened to attacks upon a body of women organising, on absolutely justifiable lines, for professional purposes.

Again, the Nurses' Co-operation, of 8, New Cavendish Street, has of recent years had to run the gauntlet of most unfair criticism in his organ. Since the Co-operation wisely refused

to relieve Sir Henry Burdett of the lease of a house at Clapham, which was at a considerable distance from the nearest station, and to rent the fourth and fifth storeys (overlooking the Covent Garden Salad Market) of the *Hospital* buildings for the purposes of a club, it has found no favour in his sight. Nevertheless anyone with practical knowledge of the working of a private nursing institution must realise, as the Co-operation did, the impracticability of an office at the West End, a club in the neighbourhood of the Strand, and residential quarters in the suburbs; and the charming residential home in Langham Street since built by the Co-operation testifies to the wisdom of its refusal; but its offence has apparently never been forgotten or forgiven.

It says much for the tenacity of purpose of those women engaged in the struggle for nursing organisation that, after seventeen years of unscrupulous opposition and misrepresentation, they are as determined in their efforts to obtain reform as in the early days of enthusiasm. But they are animated by conscientious conviction, and, this being so, it will take more than the coarse abuse of Sir Henry Burdett to turn them from their purpose.

According to this authority, a "real Nursing Council is being formed which is truly representative." We are glad to hear it. It is high time. Nothing could prove more strongly the truth of the statement made by a leading Scotch Matron years ago that if the nursing world would not co-operate for the public good it would have to be coerced; and public opinion has of late demanded that the hospitals should put their nursing departments in order.

But any attempt to govern nurses by a Board on which they themselves have not adequate representation is, by the laws of evolution, doomed to failure. An effort to institute any system of government through a body composed solely of employers of nurses and excluding nurses themselves is, what we should call, "class legislation." In the great Australian Colonies and in the United States,

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