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Editorial.

THE ENSLAVEMENT OF THE PROFESSIONAL NURSE.

We learn that the Guy's Hospital Registration Scheme for Nurses, or, as it is officially named, "The Incorporated Society for Promoting the Higher Education and Training of Nurses," has been mainly inspired by Sir Henry Burdett, who for seventeen years has used every effort to prevent Registration of Nurses, either by voluntary effort or otherwise, by any association in which he could not hold an official position. In the new scheme a seat has been, of course, provided for Sir Henry Burdett. It goes without saying that like all his schemes for nurses a large element of "patronage" figures in its arrangements, and representative government by the nurses themselves is entirely eliminated.

After this barefaced *volte face* once more on the part of Sir Henry Burdett on the Registration question, it will surprise no one to learn that it is rumoured that Miss Monk, of King's, will also take an active part in the new scheme, so that we may assume the fight against the *principle* of Registration is no longer possible. This is all to the good for the Registrationists, for so long as people act from conscientious scruples about principle, then opposition is worthy of consideration, but haul down that flag, and it merely remains a question of persons. The Guy's move means a triangular readjustment of opinion on the Registration question.

1. The State Registrationists.—Those nurses and doctors who for years have held firmly to the opinion that effective organisation of the nursing profession can alone be accomplished by State Authority, and who have seen all efforts to organise justly on voluntary lines, opposed or made futile by Nurse Training School officials.
2. The Irreconcilables, or London Hospital Party—who object to any form of State interference in nursing matters, and who still rank nurses as domestic workers

without any professional or industrial rights whatever.

3. The Expedients, who have for years wobbled on the question of Registration, who have used every effort to prevent it, but who, realising that legal status is within measurable distance, desire to minimise any real danger to the control of the employer by substituting at the last moment a voluntary scheme, in which they will have absolute power, for a legal one.

As Guy's Hospital has taken the initiative in the counter scheme, it is well to realise that the personal liberty of the nurses in that institution leaves much to be desired. We have only to state: 1. That every staff nurse at Guy's is compelled, whether she wishes it or not, to subscribe to the Royal National Pension Fund, and that the authorities deduct part of her premium from the salary which she has earned. 2. That each nurse, of whatever rank, is compelled to join and subscribe from 5s. to £1 1s. annually to the Nurses' League, all liberty of action being denied the nursing staff in these matters.

This bureaucratic government is quite out of date, and would not for a moment be tolerated by nurses trained in schools where entire liberty of action in such personal affairs is a matter of course. Any attempt to rush a third voluntary Registration scheme—the R.B.N.A. already has one, and that started by the Hospitals Association expired in embryo—composed of employers of nurses, cannot possibly meet the justifiable aspirations of educated, well-trained nurses, who claim the right to help to make the laws which shall govern their work. We learn, moreover, that offence has naturally been given to some of the leading Matrons by inviting them to join the Council, after the scheme had been cut and dried and presented to the Board of Trade for incorporation.

Anyway, the course of Legal Registrationists is quite plain. A just measure of self-government and legal status or nothing.

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