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A Retrospect of Registration Politics.

We make no apology to our readers for devoting the greater part of our space this week to a matter which we consider touches their liberties and their well-being very nearly.

We would ask every nurse to carefully read this copy of the journal and keep it for reference.

Only those women who have worked on their Committees to obtain the State Registration of Trained Nurses through the early days of the Hospitals' Association and the Royal British Nurses' Association can understand thoroughly the bitterness of the fight, or the unscrupulous methods which have been employed to prevent trained nurses from organising their profession on lines which afford to them a fair share of self-government. The main opposer to this justifiable demand has always been Sir Henry Burdett, and nurses must bear this in mind in considering any scheme for their registration and control promoted by him. They will then realise the significance of the fact that he has once more been instrumental in flinging the apple of discord amongst them, his attempt on this occasion being to place the training-schools and nurses under the absolute control of a wealthy and lay autocracy.

We shall adopt no half measures in criticising the latest movement to grasp the control of trained nurses, and to keep this in the hands of their employers. We feel it our duty to warn the whole profession of nursing of the terrible danger which gapes at their feet owing to the fact that seven wealthy financiers in the City of London have petitioned the Board of Trade to incorporate them as "The Incorporated Society for Promoting the Higher Education and Training of Nurses," with powers constituting them the organisers, disciplinarians, and masters of every trained nurse and training-school in the United Kingdom. For the powers for which they ask mean control of the most despotic and unconstitutional character, which, if granted, would result in the reduction of a great body of educated, intelligent, professional women workers to the position of absolute serfs in the body politic.

If we write strongly it is because we feel strongly,

and we realise the appalling danger with which we are confronted. We do not for a moment suppose that the gentlemen applying for incorporation by the Board of Trade know what will be the effect of the document to which they have set their hands, or that they have sought or received the opinion of any self-governing associations of nurses on their scheme. To state facts:—

As Sir Henry Burdett is the inspirer of this new movement, it will be well to pause and consider his conduct and line of action in relation to the question of State Registration for Nurses.

THE HOSPITALS' ASSOCIATION.

The Registration of Trained Nurses having been suggested by several persons previous to the year 1886, Sir Henry (then Mr.) Burdett started an organisation known as the Hospitals' Association, one of the propositions in connection with it being that the Association should undertake the Registration of Nurses.

A Nursing Sub Committee was formed, of which Mrs. Bedford Fenwick (then Miss Manson, Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital) acted as Chairman, and Miss C. J. Wood as Hon. Secretary.

In May, 1887, we find Sir Henry Burdett writing in his newspaper, the *Hospital*, on the Registration question: "So much good is likely to result from the scheme that we are surprised that no steps have been taken previously to establish a Register for trained nurses."

The Nursing Sub Committee formulated a scheme for Registration, recommending that the qualification should be not less than three years' training. At a meeting of the Council, however, the suggestions of this professional Committee were swept aside, and Sir Henry Burdett's proposals—which substituted one year for three years' training, and the registration of those who attained this standard at a fee of half-a-crown—were adopted. At the next meeting of the Nursing Sub-Committee, the Matrons protested against this high-handed overriding of their suggestions, and called a meeting at which they proposed to place their resignations, and the reason for such resignation, in the hands of the Council. At this meeting the minute book was refused to the Chairman by the then Secretary, Mr. Howard Collins, and it was only when Miss Wood uttered the now historic sentence: "We are here by right and not by courtesy," that the book was produced.

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