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EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

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## Editorial.

### RIGHT OR MIGHT.

The passing of the Nurses' Registration Bill in the House of Lords is so important an event in the movement for legal status of nurses that it is well to summarise briefly its past history and present position.

1. Those matrons and nurses who took part in founding the British Nurses' Association, through which it was originally hoped to effect this reform, know that the motive which inspired them was primarily the protection of the sick. In the course of their work they came constantly in contact with injury and unnecessary suffering caused by the lack of nursing standards, and they therefore considered it their duty to take steps to secure the establishment of such standards.

2. The next object was to demonstrate the right of the workers to unite, and it is this, not the mere fact that nurses desire to have their names placed on a list, which has aroused all the bitter and unscrupulous opposition, in the public press, and out of it, which the promoters of nursing legislation have had to face for the last twenty years in their efforts to obtain a just measure.

The men who drafted the "Scheme for the Higher Education of Nurses," to carry out which they sought powers as an incorporated Body from the Board of Trade, were quite ready to publish a list, provided the nurses whose names were placed upon it were nonentities on the Body appointed to control them.

The Central Hospital Council for London in its futile "Official Directory of Nurses' Bill," sought powers from Parliament to publish such a list, and to appoint a Registrar with absolute control of the professional reputations of any nurses unwise enough to place their names upon it.

The opposition to the Nurses' Registration Bill is concentrated on Clause 4, which deals with the constitution of the Council, the future governing body of the nursing profession, and under which it is provided that the workers shall be represented on their own governing body.

As is well known, until a sufficient number of nurses have been registered to form an electorate to elect the seven direct representatives granted to them in the Bill passed by the House of Lords, certain societies are to nominate nurse representatives. It is a significant fact that the Societies signalled out for attack by the opposition are those composed exclusively of the workers, as opposed to those upon which the employers also have seats. The Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, and the Irish Nurses' Association, which alone exclusively represent nurses, and which have worked for the Bill and financed the movement, are those whose position on the Council has been assailed. But, the debate in the House of Lords on November 10th, proved conclusively that the day had passed when the might of the privileged few could be held to outweigh the rightful claims of the many thousands of workers to share in the control of the profession which they compose. The duty at the present moment of every nurse who desires to further the welfare of the sick through the organisation of her profession, is to ally herself with the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, which is the instrument through which the work is being accomplished, so that when at last the Act for the Registration of Nurses is placed on the Statute Book she may have the satisfaction of having taken part in obtaining privileges which the Act will confer upon her.

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