

The Nursing Record

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EDITORIAL.

CONTINUING our consideration of the all-important subject of Registration, we now come to an objection which is urged against the scheme by two classes of people united by one common fear. We are informed that there are a few matrons, and a smaller number of lay managers, of nurse-training hospitals who are strenuously opposed to registration, because they imagine it will lessen, or destroy, their authority over their nurses.

This objection, as they enunciate it, has a certain air of plausibility which, perchance, may persuade themselves, and even some others who have neither time, ability, or inclination to investigate the matter. And they wisely strengthen their ground by asserting that their objection is based upon purely impersonal grounds.

"Far be it from us," they say in effect, "to desire mere private ends—power and influence. We object to registration for great public reasons. We consider that it would damage the discipline, relax the bonds of authority, and make our nurses independent of us, and therefore place them at once beyond our control, and that, of course, would be disastrous to the welfare of our or any other institution, and to every patient within its walls."

They do not smile—nay, they look sad and solemn as they say this; and so we will be sad and solemn too, and gravely discuss the matter upon the ground they themselves have chosen.

We commence at once by stating that in our judgment they are completely and entirely mistaken; that registration, we believe, will not diminish by one iota the influence or the authority they now possess over nurses, individually or collectively. We go even further, and perhaps may rather startle them when we state our firm conviction, that the one objection we ourselves have felt towards the scheme lies in the almost certain fact that matrons and lay managers of hospitals will obtain more power over probationers and nurses individually when registration comes into force than they now possess.

But if we can prove our point, and show that their fears of lessened authority, relaxed discipline, and so forth, are groundless, we venture to hope that these objectors will at once discontinue their opposition, and rank themselves among the firm advocates of registration; for the good, of course, of the public.

We ask them, therefore, to remember clearly the cardinal fact, that registration is *for trained nurses only*—not for probationers, or even staff nurses who are not fully trained. They do not, it appears to us, either know, or at any rate realise, the effect of this; for if they did, it would then be self-evident to them that, as probationers and staff nurses who have not concluded their training cannot be registered, registration can make no possible difference to their relative positions and duties, or diminish in the smallest measure the obedience they owe to their superior officers, or excuse their non-observance of the slightest regulation of the institution in which they are serving their probationary period.

When registration comes into force it is absolutely certain that women must go to hospitals to obtain their knowledge and training, precisely as they now must do. It is equally plain that a probationer can only be admitted for that training into any given nursing school by being selected from other candidates by the matron or lady superintendent of that institution. How then will the influence of the matron or the lay managers be lessened by registration over their probationers? Will it not be vastly increased? We maintain that it must be—because the moment

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