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Editorial.

A BETRAYAL OF TRUST.

The current issue of the Journal of the Royal British Nurses' Association contains an announcement to its registered nurses, the significance of which may escape the notice of many.

It is no new thing that the professional interests of the members have been ruthlessly sacrificed during the period of mismanagement inaugurated under the absolute rule of the medical hon. officers, but their latest proposal affords the most startling evidence of this fact.

THE REGISTER.

The early members of the Association well remember that, in the petition for the Royal Charter, the Association stated that in furtherance of its objects "a List of Nurses has been compiled and published setting forth the names and addresses of nurses, with the names of the hospitals and institutions at which they have been trained, and the length of training which each has received, thus enabling the public to form a more accurate judgment of the professional education and experience of the nurses so registered."

This plainly was the intention of the Charter when granted, and it is noteworthy that at the dinner held to celebrate the granting of this Charter to the Association the Chairman (the late Sir William Savory) said: "This Charter has been granted largely upon the strength of the character of those supporting the prayer for it, in the faith that they will well and truly carry out the obligations that it imposes." How have the hon. officers fulfilled the trust imposed upon them?

The principal advantage conferred on nurses by the Charter was the official status thus given to the Register of Trained Nurses already issued by the Association, which, much in the form of the Medical Register, gave the addresses and qualifications of the nurses registered, and was on public sale, thus giving,

on account of its publicity, professional recognition to the nurses so registered.

The distinguished tribunal which heard the petition of the Association for a Royal Charter, composed of Lords Ripon, Hobhouse, Oxenbridge, and Hannen, gave due weight to this consideration, as is evident from the conclusion at which they arrived: "That a permanent Association, formed for the purpose of maintaining a closer connection among persons practising as nurses, and thereby ensuring mutual counsel, comfort, and support, and for the purpose of disseminating to the public at large information respecting such persons, is likely to prove of much public benefit, and that such purposes would be better ensured by the incorporation of such an Association."

For the benefit of this public registration many hundreds of nurses have paid a registration fee of £1 1s. to the Royal British Nurses' Association, in the belief that the responsible officers would well and truly carry out the obligations they had undertaken.

With the usual incapacity of men for managing women's affairs, the hon. officers of the R.B.N.A. have proved themselves adepts in the art of depriving the nurses of the advantage for which they have paid.

The first blow, aimed full at the status of the Register, was dealt by Mr. Edward Fardon, the Medical Hon. Secretary of the Association, who, while holding this office in a society formed to obtain Legal Registration, publicly voted for a resolution:

"That a legal system of Registration of Nurses is inexpedient in principle and injurious to the best interests of Nurses, and of doubtful public benefit."

This was in 1896.

THE NEW BYE-LAWS.

It will be remembered that in the black year of 1897 new Bye-Laws were drafted and thrust through by the most autocratic and unconstitutional methods, under which the medical hon. officers can practically govern the Nurses' Association as they choose.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)