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Editorial.

SOLIDARITY.

The account of the united action taken by the Matrons of the twelve hospitals under the Metropolitan Asylums Board in relation to the question of State Registration which we publish in another column will be welcome news to many. While it is well known in the nursing world that the feeling amongst trained nurses is overwhelmingly in favour of the principle of Registration, the strong lead which they have a right to expect from the heads of the large metropolitan nurse-training schools has not yet been accorded to them. With some honourable exceptions, these ladies have been slow to come forward to take part publicly in supporting a principle which in private many of them endorse, and the enforcement of which they admit is necessary to the good government of their profession and to the public welfare.

At the present juncture, one ounce of public support is worth many pounds of opinions privately expressed, and the unanimous action of the Matrons of hospitals under the Metropolitan Asylums Board in memorialising the Board to support the present demand for the State Registration of Nurses is a hopeful augury for the future. Is it possible that other hospital Matrons, regarding only the main issue at stake, taking heart of grace, will set on one side all minor considerations, their fears as to expediency, their doubts as to whether the "time has yet come," and will come out firm and strong on the Registration question?

At the present time what is needed is solidarity in our ranks. The demand for Registration will certainly be opposed, as every other reform, however necessary, finds an opposer, in the House of Commons, on behalf of vested interests. It is due, therefore, to Dr. Farquharson, who is in charge of the Bill for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, that those who are in favour of the principle should accord him their outspoken and active support so

that he may be assured of the appreciation of those whose cause he is advocating.

One of the most difficult things in the world is to get women to take united action. Men have learnt the lesson long since. It is the breath of their public-school, and later of university, life. Those who enter commercial life learn its paramount importance from an industrial standpoint, and the artisan classes have now learnt that the only method of making their views and influence felt is by means of organisation through their trades unions. Individual voices may be raised in ineffective protest; they are drowned in the noise of the world. The voice of a great mass meeting, or of a trade union, is listened to with respect by the employers of labour. The day of the individual has gone past, and combination and co-operation are essential to success.

"When are we going to get Registration?" is a question we are often asked. We are going to get it just when we are prepared to make sacrifices for it, to work for it in season and out of season, to endure the misrepresentation of our aims and motives rather than give up working for the cause which we know to be just and right. No great reform has ever been won without self-sacrifice, without a hard fight with the forces arrayed against it on behalf of ignorance, prejudice, and self-interest.

Nurses in the past have not realised this sufficiently. They believe that Registration is a good and necessary thing; they firmly believe that it will "come" some day—the sooner the better; but that they must be at considerable personal pains to hasten its advent they have been slow to learn. Only now are they beginning to understand the struggle before them.

There is no more fatal mistake in political as in actual warfare than to under-estimate the force of the adversary. We shall be wise, therefore, to reckon up the forces we may expect to have arrayed against us on the Registration question, and, knowing them, to conquer them by united action and solidarity of front in the face of a common foe.

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