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Editorial.

THE NURSE PAYS.

We are glad that the financial aspect of the proposed scheme for the Registration of Nurses emanating from Threadneedle Street has not escaped the attention of those who have grasped the significance of this latest attempt for the subjugation of nurses, and who are doing their utmost to prevent the Incorporation of the Society for Promoting the Higher Education and Training of Nurses by the Board of Trade.

Thus, at the Public Meeting of Protest held in London, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick pointed out that though the bitter opposition to the desire of trained nurses for Registration under the authority of the State, with adequate powers of self-government seemed almost incredible, it really arose from the fact that Registration was a woman's question, and an industrial question, and wherever this combination presented itself, there was always a tremendous amount of opposition from people who did not allow that women have any rights—personal, industrial, or, still more, financial.

Therefore, in the last scheme for the control of nurses, they were expected to place themselves under a Body which proposed to establish an absolute autocracy over them, they must consent to be carefully and deliberately excluded from representation on the Body which governed them, and, lastly, and most important, for without this element the scheme would probably never have been heard of, they must be prepared to pay all the expenses of the Society. In the scheme emanating from Threadneedle Street there was no suggestion that the gentlemen who applied for such drastic powers of control over nurses should put down one farthing to finance it. This office was allotted to the nurses. Every candidate was to pay such fee or fees as the Council might from time to time fix. But the members (that is to say the signatories to the Memorandum and the persons composing the

Council, the Consultative Board and the Examination Board, **not the nurses**) might have 5 per cent. for any money lent to the Society. It was not a bad investment. She did not know how many nurses in that room could obtain 5 per cent. for their money. Personally she was unable to do so.

At the meeting of the Irish Nurses' Association held in Dublin on Friday, Feb. 24th, the Chairman, Miss S. E. Hampson, as we report in another column, also drew attention to the financial aspect of the question. She showed that nurses are well able to finance the Body entrusted with their government (a point of considerable importance, because it is well recognised that those who pay the piper have a right to call the tune). She reminded nurses that, though individually they were not rich, yet collectively they were a power, a fact which they will do well always to keep in mind.

Miss Hampson's opinion is one which must carry weight. Trained at St. Thomas's Hospital, she has, since her residence in Dublin, where for a considerable time she held the position of Lady Superintendent of the Rotunda Hospital, gained the respect and confidence of the whole Irish nursing world.

We have no hesitation in saying that had it not been realised by the projectors of the new scheme that there was money in it they would never have approached the signatories, and persuaded them to act as its sponsors, and the nurses would have been left alone. As it is, we are confronted by an attempt on the part of business men to grasp the control of a potentially rich body of professional women. There is little doubt that if the Bill for the State Registration of Trained Nurses before Parliament becomes law, not one penny will be needed from the Imperial Exchequer to carry out its provisions. But the nurses who pay must keep the money they subscribe under their own control. It is this just demand for self-government and control which is the point around which the opposition to the State Registration of Nurses centres.

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