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Editorial.

THE FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF REGISTRATION.—I.

Among the many important questions which have been raised before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, concerning the Registration of Nurses, there are several financial details upon which some uncertainty appears to prevail. We propose, therefore, to consider these matters at some length, and as they are all points which will from time to time again arise in public and private discussions concerning Registration, we would advise nurses to keep these journals before them so that, if necessary, they can refer others to the explanations we propose to give.

The first point to which we would allude is the cost of a nurse's education compared with that of women workers in other callings. Valuable statistics were given on this subject by Lady Helen Munro-Ferguson in her evidence before the Committee; and to this we would refer any reader who desires to obtain accurate information on the subject. It is sufficient for our present purpose to point out that women engaged in many occupations—which are not recognised as on a level with Nursing—are called upon to pay large premiums in order to obtain technical instruction; whereas, at the present day, it is comparatively rare for hospitals not to pay their probationers, however small a salary, from their very entrance into the institution. It is often forgotten also, in this connection, that whilst learners in other occupations are called upon to provide for their own board and lodging, probationers are afforded, from the very first, excellent accommodation, generally speaking, a very liberal dietary, every care and attention if they are taken ill, and, moreover, are provided with a certain amount of uniform, and even with washing, at no charge to themselves. We are within the margin in estimating that every probationer costs her hospital on an average £50 a year, to say nothing of the cost to the institution of the

Nursing Home and its domestic staff—a proportion of which, as representing the nurse's lodging, should, of course, be added to that estimate. When these facts are carefully considered, it becomes evident that the trained nurse obtains the cheapest education for any skilled calling in the world.

It was stated by Sir Henry Burdett—with his customary inaccuracy—that nurses should not be asked to pay five guineas for their registration and examination because doctors were only called upon to pay £5. His statement is not only inaccurate, but most misleading; because all that doctors obtain for their £5 is the publication of their name on the Medical Register, whereas it has been suggested that, for five guineas, nurses might be examined and certificated, as well as registered, by the State. As a matter of fact, the fees which a doctor pays for his examinations vary from £25 to fifty-two guineas before he can obtain a diploma to practise his profession, according to the Corporation or University whose licence he seeks to obtain. Compared with this, the fee which it is suggested that nurses should pay is small indeed. But it must also be remembered that the medical student not only has to pay, for his education, sums varying from £110 to £150, according to the medical school which he has joined, but he is also called upon to pay from £100 a year for his board and lodging during his pupilage; while, as we have already shown, the nurse during her student life not only receives some remuneration for her work, but is entirely kept and partly clothed at the expense of her training-school. It is necessary to emphasise these points because there is evidently a great deal of misconception concerning them on the part both of nurses and of the public.

We have always laid stress on the fact that Nursing ought to be a self-governed profession, as other great professions are; but nurses must clearly understand that this can never come to pass unless they are prepared to pay the entire expenses of their governing body, as

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