

Progress of State Registration.

The cause of State Registration for Nurses is helped by its foes as well as its friends, and we are inclined to think that the articles dealing with the question which have appeared in the last two issues of the quarterly leaflet of the Cottage Benefit Association, will do good rather than harm to the registration movement. One of these is a leading article written by the Hon. Secretary of the Association, Miss Bertha M. Broadwood, and the other a report of her address at the General Council meeting. To quote:

"Amongst the most ardent advocates for the Bills, which have heretofore been brought forward, are several ex-nurses, and ex-hospital Matrons. These ladies, although no longer responsible for nursing or the training of nurses, are keenly determined to pose as leaders, and have placed themselves at the head of a party which desires to exalt nursing to a level but a little below that of the Medical Profession, and to restrict it to women of higher educational attainments and of higher standards of living than those of the working class. In short they would make nursing into a *close profession* limited to a few highly-paid individuals. Of course they will fail as did those lady-midwives who, animated by similar pretensions and ambitions, were the most persistent workers for the Midwives' Act.

"Meanwhile they may do great harm, and inflict much injury upon the great numbers of working class women whose interests as practical nurses, or as suffering patients, these ambitious *ex-lady nurses* entirely ignore."

For "envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness," the above extract would surely be hard to beat. Reference to the Bill promoted by the Society for the State Registration of Nurses will also prove its inaccuracy.

IDEAS MARCH MADLY WITH MOTOR SPEED.

In the current issue Miss Broadwood indulges in even stranger rhapsodies. "Immediate effort is needed before our liberty of action is hindered by the shackles of *State interference*. *La Politique gâte tout* is terribly true of party politics, and we may keep free of them here and now; but still we must not shut our eyes and ears to the great dangers, the frightful dangers, ahead of our work in these days when ideas march madly with motor speed into minds of persons who never pause to work out their imaginations to logical conclusions, but possessed by the mania for legislative interference, struggle and strive to foist a mandate

on would-be legislators heedless as themselves."

The Honourable Members of the House of Commons who carefully listened to and sifted the evidence on the question of State Registration may be excused if they do not recognise this portrait, but it will give them some idea of the treatment to which those nurses who have striven to do what they hold to be their duty in connection with the Registration movement have been subjected by ignorant persons.

In regard to the "ideas marching madly with motor speed," we may mention that the first suggestion of State Registration of Nurses was made by Sir Henry (then Dr.) Acland in the preface to a nursing hand-book published in 1874.

Since 1887 nurses have been actively working to obtain it. If this is mad motor speed we must own we should like some faster means of attaining the goal. The main result of this "reckless, feverish haste to amend all evils by Acts of Parliament is," Miss Broadwood asserts, "the creation of a host of bureaucrats empowered through boards, county councils, and offices to carry out *State interference*."

"It will probably take years, a generation or two of suffering, to quench this mania for interference, to muzzle the demon of State control, which is encouraging the growth of bureaucratic tyranny.

"Meanwhile the shackles are being forged very fast indeed by those who are aided and abetted in every possible quarter by the evil spirits of self-interest, professionalism and ambition."

"Have you grasped," Miss Broadwood asks her Council, "the dangers which threaten our work?"

"1. In the near future, State Registration of Nurses.

"2. And close upon its heels, with a good chance of out-distancing it, State Control of Training Homes, which, should Part II. of the present Education Bill become enacted without many amendments, will come under the domination of the Board of Education just whenever the officials thereof decide to interfere with them."

And all this because in all quarters of the world thoughtful Nurses who realise the gravity of the charge imposed upon those who care for the sick are asking that before a woman is allowed to rank as a professional nurse she shall afford evidence to a competent authority, appointed by the State, that she possesses the necessary knowledge; and that such Nurses as afford this guarantee shall have their names entered on a Public Register!

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