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## Editorial.

### THE SPIRIT OF REGISTRATION.

It is always with gaiety of spirit that one faces the problems of the New Year for the reason that it holds for us the unknown, and its possibilities are boundless. We may build what castles in the air we will, and no one can damp our enjoyment in them, for no one can know whether by the time another year dawns they may not have assumed a substantial form. Those who see visions, and dream dreams, who also work to give effect to them, and who dare greatly, receive many unlikely gifts from the hand of Dame Fortune.

It is decreed that 1908 shall be a "Registration Year." There are no Congresses—all engrossing as they are—to distract our attention and to lay claim on our time, and, unquestionably, the question of paramount importance to nurses in the United Kingdom at present is the regulation of their profession which can only be accomplished through its organisation under the authority of the State.

It is in no selfish spirit that nurses approach this question. Pride of craft is surely a virtue in any worker, and all nurses inspired by such pride grieve that the name of the profession of their choice, in whose unlimited possibilities for service to the community they have a passionate belief—should fall so far short of those possibilities, and should so often have to bear the blame of the shortcomings of those who are not its members, simply for lack of organisation. Further the primary evil is the injury to the sick, whom we as nurses serve. Notwithstanding the spirit of devotion in our ranks we are unable to protect the sick public from the suffering and danger caused by incompetence because we cannot point to any standard and say to members of the public seeking nurses "this is the standard which

has authoritatively been laid down as necessary in a man or woman placed in responsible nursing charge of the sick. There is nothing to prevent you from employing some one who has not attained that standard, only you must understand that the trained and registered nurse has passed through the prescribed curriculum and satisfied the heads of her profession as to her efficiency and that the unregistered nurse offers you no such guarantee."

This urgent need of a definite standard of education for nurses is a point which we should impress upon Members of Parliament, and nurses can do good service by forwarding to Members from time to time marked copies of the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING—the only professionally edited weekly nursing paper in the United Kingdom—containing marked articles on the registration question. A point also on which emphasis should be laid is that British Nurses cannot afford to fall behind those of other nations and of some of our own Colonies who are forging ahead of us in the matter of professional organisation.

Let our aim for the Year be to urge upon our legislators the necessity for the introduction of a Nurses' Registration Act. We have patiently waited so far knowing that the present Government when it came into office believed itself pledged to introduce legislation in regard to matters of greater importance, but the trained nurse is now an indispensable public servant in connection with State Departments and as a social worker. It is not to the public advantage that her qualifications should remain undefined or her practice unregulated, and we know of no bit of domestic legislation which would reflect greater credit on a Government of any party, or have more far reaching effect for good upon the community, than a well considered Act for the State Registration of Trained Nurses.

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