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Editorial.

THE VALUE OF ORGANISATION.

As we went to press last week the debate in the House of Lords on the second reading of the Nurses' Official Directory Bill was proceeding, and nurses in all parts of the United Kingdom were anxiously awaiting the result of the division. By that division, as speedily became known, the House of Lords rejected the Bill by 53 votes to 20, a triumphant vindication of the claim of trained nurses to be consulted as to legislation so intimately affecting them, for even those who were most sanguine as to the rejection of the Bill scarcely expected so decisive a majority.

Those who had the privilege of listening to this memorable debate were impressed by two chief aspects: The knowledge shown in the subject under discussion by those Lords who took part in it, and the liberality with which they approached it. The debate throughout was on a high level, and over and over again the point of view of the nurses was put forward, and the facts that the Nurses' Official Directory Bill of the Central Hospital Council for London was repugnant to them, and that the views of the medical and nursing professions had not been sought in regard to it, were urged as reasons for its rejection. That these arguments were regarded by the House of Lords as just and reasonable was proved by the result of the division.

The lesson of the victory of the nurses is twofold: the necessity for an organ in the press controlled by trained nurses, and the value of professional organisation.

The BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, and it alone, immediately directed the attention of the nursing profession to the fact that the Bill had been introduced into the House of Lords, printed it *in extenso*, and drew attention to the dangerous character of its

provisions, thus enabling the organised societies of nurses to consider it, and to take steps to communicate their views upon it to members of the House of Lords. Further, the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses promptly communicated both with Lord Balfour of Burleigh, who had charge of the Bill, and with Lord Ampthill, who gave notice that he would move its rejection, and both these Lords courteously received deputations, who presented memoranda on the subject. A memorandum dealing with the question was also sent by the Society to every member of the House of Lords, and later a copy of the resolutions passed unanimously at the annual meeting on May 2nd condemning the Directory Bill.

Lord Ampthill was thus able to prove conclusively that while there was widespread opposition on the part of organised bodies to the Bill, it was supported only by a few individuals.

To every trained nurse membership of a profession brings corporate responsibilities, and in order to discharge them she should ally herself to a professional organisation.

It is also incumbent upon her, as a matter of self-protection, as well as of professional loyalty, to support the journal which has repeatedly proved that it is prepared to place the interests of the public and the nurses before commercial considerations, to fearlessly condemn schemes detrimental to their interests, and to give its whole-hearted support to those which are calculated to further them.

Through such co-operation nurses may attain the position to which, by their services to the sick, they are entitled, and to which the decision of the House of Lords last week has brought us appreciably nearer—that of membership of a profession, recognised and organised by the State.

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