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EDITORIAL.

NATIONAL EDUCATION.

One of the most important announcements made in recent years on behalf of the Government is the statement of the Lord Chancellor (Lord Haldane) that the next question to have precedence in Parliament will be the question of education, for it is undeniable that the education of all grades compares unfavourably with that in many countries on the continent, both as regards thoroughness, practical usefulness and general culture.

Speaking at the Manchester Reform Club, Lord Haldane said "Another great social problem was now upon them. Hitherto the Liberal party had done nothing publicly for the coming generation, and yet the coming generation was in some respects the most important of all. In what he was going to say he was not speaking casually, or with any light sense of responsibility, but, after consulting with the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr. Pease, they had decided that this question was the next and the most urgent of the great social problems they had taken up. Of course it was education. The state of education in this country, elementary and secondary, and higher, was chaotic; and his colleagues and he felt that the time had come when a step forward must be taken, and on no small scale. . . . How was it to be done? Education, if it was to be interesting, must be an appeal to the spirit. It must be an endeavour to raise the level intellectually and morally of the coming generation, upon whose superiority the country would depend in the days to come to meet growing competition. It was worth while making a sacrifice to bring about that result. . . . It was a tremendous question which they had before them. It

was a costly question, too, but the expenditure was productive expenditure."

We will only discuss in greater detail the education of nurses, and it is certain that the Bill for their registration, which is primarily an educational Bill, would have received much greater consideration had we, as a nation, been interested in educational problems, and had the Matrons of our hospitals been educationalists, and claimed as Mrs. Hampton Robb (then Miss Hampton) claimed—when offered the position of Superintendent of Nurses of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore—the title of Principal of the Training School, in addition, in order to emphasize the educational character of her office.

In truth this is the key to the position of the registration movement and the attitude adopted by its opponents. Committees composed of financiers and philanthropists see no necessity for spending money on nurses' education, and indeed it would be questionable whether they were within their right as almoners of hospital funds to do so were it not that they secure a large amount of cheap labour from pupils in training, on the understanding that, in return, they will receive the education qualifying them to become competent members of the nursing profession. But, too often, the labour secured, the *quid pro quo* given in educational advantages is of the most perfunctory character possible, and in too many cases the Matron acquiesces in this because she is not herself an educationalist and does not appreciate the value and importance of thorough theoretical and technical instruction.

In nearly every State in America in which registration is in force, applicants for admission to the training school are required to produce evidence of high school education. In this country "Can you read

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)