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EDITORIAL.

THE SCOTTISH NURSE.

Different nations have different characteristics. We all know the versatility and charm of the Latin races, the thoroughness of the Teutonic peoples, the wit and loveliness of the Celt, the justice and reliability inherent in the best type of English man and woman. And the Scottish people have qualities peculiarly their own, endurance, grit, determination, simplicity, sincerity, and practical ability, which make us instinctively trust them in any difficulty, knowing that they will not fail us.

These qualities characteristic of the Scottish nation as a whole, are particularly valuable in those who adopt the profession of nursing, and it is not only the excellent training they receive in finely equipped hospitals, with well organized training schools attached, which accounts for the efficiency of so many Scottish nurses, and the appreciation of their work not only over the border, but in our overseas dominions, but the fact that the women who apply for training are possessed of fine qualities which respond to the special teaching given, and which go far to make them successful subsequently, both as administrators, and as private nurses.

The same qualities which make Scottish nurses of value in their practical work will equally make them valuable adherents of the cause of State Registration for Nurses. They were not quick to organize, for though the movement for State Organization of Trained Nurses began in England in 1887, it was not until 1909 that the first association of nurses was formed in Scotland with the avowed object of promoting a system of registration of nurses. Since then two other associations of nurses have been formed with similar objects, and now,

both the medical and nursing professions in Scotland are practically unanimous, and two of the above mentioned associations are represented on the Central Committee for State Registration of Nurses in London, and regularly send their delegates to attend its meetings.

Now that Scottish nurses have acquainted themselves with the question, and understand the weighty reasons which underlie the demand for registration, we are hopeful that they will do much to help on the cause, not only by their personal adhesion, but by taking trouble, wherever they may be, to act as missionaries, explaining to members of the public—amongst whom their patients are often the most ready and interested listeners—the educational, economic and public reasons which make the passing of an Act of Parliament “to regulate the qualifications of trained nurses” an urgent necessity.

Of all the reasons, and they are many, which can be advanced in favour of this reform, the one of paramount importance is the safety of the sick. This is the lodestar which has guided those who have worked for over a quarter of a century to obtain registration, it is an inspiration which has never failed them through all this period. For no one knows better than nurses the amount of unnecessary suffering caused by inefficiently trained, incompetent and callous nurses, and they are determined that every one who chooses to don a uniform shall not be let loose upon the public as a trained nurse, but that the words shall imply the attainment of a definite standard of efficiency, that organization and professional control shall take the place of the disorganization which at present prevails, and that an Act for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, which will afford them a foundation on which to build, shall, without delay be placed upon the Statute Book.

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