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"QUI NON PROFICIT, DEFICIT."

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**IMPORTANT NOTICE.**—*Those of our subscribers who wish to notify change of address must send such notification in order that it may reach the publishers NOT LATER than the Monday morning before publishing, otherwise the change cannot be made.*

## EDITORIAL.

### THE ROYAL BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION

IT is with unfeigned pleasure that we learn the most recent news of the Association to which from the first number of this Journal we have accorded unswerving support. It is officially announced that the Queen has been graciously pleased to command that the British Nurses' Association shall henceforth bear the title and prefix of Royal. As a proof of Her Majesty's gracious sympathy with, and approval of, the great work in which the Association is engaged this fact is highly important. But a very brief consideration of the real meaning of the title, and of the status which is thereby accorded, shows that the event is one of still deeper significance.

In this country, from time immemorial, the title of Royal has not been, as is very commonly supposed, a mere accompaniment of royalty, nor

even a title belonging by inherent right to the reigning sovereign and his nearest relatives, or accorded by him to what institution he might please, but has been, essentially, and above all things, a State distinction. By the theory of the English Constitution, the Head of the State and all his children bear the title because of their relation to the State. But the same principle which makes the members of the Government responsible to the people for the right conduct of affairs, places upon the Government, not upon the Crown, the entire responsibility for the bestowal of all titles, whether upon individuals or upon Institutions, although the ultimate grant of all such distinctions rests in the hands of the Sovereign. The title of Royal therefore bestowed by the State upon its ruler and his family can only be obtained by any Society through the direct recommendation of the Government of the day, and it almost necessarily follows that it is only in very rare cases that it is granted. As a general rule, it may be said that only one Society or Institution representing any section of the community so completely proves its superiority to its compeers as to receive this distinctive mark of State recognition. For example, amongst the hundreds of literary societies, we find only one Royal Society of Literature. So likewise there is only one Royal Society of Musicians, one Royal United Service Institution for the members of the Royal Navy and Army, and one Royal Agricultural Society for all the great farming interests of the country; Science in England has only the Royal Society, Architects have only one Royal Institute. Medical men have only one Royal Society—the Medical and Chirurgical—amongst the scores of kindred bodies, and now Nursing has only its Royal Association.

It must be, of course, remembered that we are

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