

## A REGISTRATION ECHO.

We have recently been reading with great interest "The Life and Friendships of Catherine Marsh," by L. E. O'Rorke, especially as we were connected by marriage with this great evangelist of the Victorian era, who ranks with Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale as one of the three most highly distinguished pioneers of women's benevolent missions in the world. It is interesting to note the sympathetic friendship which existed between Catherine Marsh and Florence Nightingale—as the letters of the latter disclose.

In the spring of 1892, Catherine Marsh had this deeply interesting letter from Miss Nightingale, known in nursing history as the year of "The Victory of the Nurses," when they won their Royal Charter, and who remain until this day the only organisation of British women so honoured:—

"10, South Street, March 24th, 1892. Dearest Miss Marsh,—How can I thank you enough for so kindly writing to me, and how much good your dear letter did me! 'God loves her, and she knows it; and she loves Him.'—how God-like are those words. I repeated them to a poor woman who had lost everything by an act of immorality and breach of trust: her good situation, her character, her child, and who wished to destroy herself. And she is now going to a safe situation, where the mistress knows it all, but takes her, and will tell no one, so that she may lead a new life, with her Saviour's help.

"You kindly ask after me. I am a good deal overworked, but thankful to be allowed to go on at all. [At this date C. M. was seventy-four, and F. N. seventy-three.—ED.] Kindly pray for the Nurses and the Nursing—not only for ours but for all. There comes sometimes a crisis in our lives which can only, I was going to say, be tided over by the help of God, as if that were not always our only mainstay—I mean, of course, where a double measure of His Spirit is needed: the Comforter, who was promised on the eve of the Crucifixion to teach us what is wrong and what is right. Our trial is not crucifixion but *fashion*. Nursing has become the fashion, and it brings in all sorts of amateur alloy—and public life instead of inner life—and *registering* instead of *training*—and duty rather loses its meaning of 'Work of God.' 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord—be it unto me according to Thy word.' Pray that to-morrow may be really this. On the other hand an extra mercantile spirit has come in of forcing up wages, regardless of providing a life, a 'home' in the meaning that *home* ought to bear of 'constant supply' and 'constant sympathy'—regardless that Hospital and Workhouse Nursing has been raised from the sink it was—not more by training than by making the Hospital and District Home a place where no good mother of any class need fear to send her daughter—a place of moral safeguard, good and kind supervision, good companions, of inspiring help, of good food and lodging, and decency and discipline.

"But I did not mean when I began writing to you, dear friend, to enlarge on Nursing, upon the influence which a Nurse ought to exert on the (far better educated than formerly) men patients, spying out whether she is acting up to her profession. But your kindness and desire to have your prayers for grace to Him Who is always smiling on us if we do not willingly grieve Him, and leading us back if we do, has made me go on to you. I am so sorry for your great trial of blindness."

The reference to "registering" cannot fail to interest us deeply, now that we have reached the last stage of the long struggle for State Registration.

It is difficult for us to estimate conditions and phases of thought in the now long-past Victorian era—but that Miss Nightingale should have failed to grasp the fact that the essence of the registration demand was to define and register a high standard of "training" that a Statutory Authority had become so urgent a necessity; a demand which the higher nursing educationists—otherwise the State Registrationists—had clearly defined so long ago as 1887!

1892 was a very fateful year for nurses. The year in which they fought their monumental battle with the Nurse-Training Schools before the Privy Council for the Royal Charter, a fight which terminated in victory for the Royal British Nurses' Association, but which cost its members £1,500! Some day the inner history of the "Thirty Years' War" (the struggle of British Nurses for legal status) must be written. It is one of the most extraordinary struggles between Capital and Labour in the world—the attempt of might to crush out right—and a veritable fairy tale at that. It has taught us that there are yet invincible powers "which shape our ends, rough hew them as we may."

## NO MONOPOLY FOR THE COLLEGE OF NURSING, LTD.

The claim of the College of Nursing, Ltd., that it must have equal representation to all the nurses' self-governing societies combined, on the General Nursing Council, on numerical grounds, cannot be maintained for a variety of reasons.

(1) Because it has done very little to promote State Registration, and has now given an order to wreck the Bill of those groups of medical men and nurses who promoted, worked for, and paid for the reform.

(2) Because its members sign a demoralizing agreement with the Council of the College, to be removed from the Register and membership, without power of self-defence; thus, they deprive themselves and incidentally their colleagues, of power of self-protection. That 14,000 trained nurses should have willingly, or ignorantly, placed themselves in such a defenceless position, is proof

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