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**EDITORIAL.**

**THE ONE PORTAL SYSTEM.**

The importance of the establishment under the authority of Parliament of the General Nursing Councils, which are charged with the duty of regulating the formation, maintenance and publication of the State Registers of Nurses, and the conditions of admission thereto, is evident in the continual attempts made to depreciate standards of nursing education. First there was the suggestion for the establishment of Supplementary Registers of Cottage Nurses under State authority, a proposition which found no favour with the General Nursing Councils. Then there is the suggestion made in the lay nursing press to revert to two grades of nurses. Such a method of organisation would be a direct attack on the one portal system of admission to the nursing profession, for which nurses have so long striven, and which is to them one of the great benefits conferred by State Registration.

To claim that there should be one standard for those who are to be the future trainers of nurses, and another for the rank and file is entirely unsound. No such distinction can be made. All nurses must attain to a defined standard, and although the position of Superintendent of a training school, or a teacher of nurses, is very important and demands specialised training, it must not be forgotten that great responsibilities devolve upon other classes of nurses. The public health nurse is a teacher, not of nurses, but of members of the community, and needs not only to be an experienced member of her profession, but to know how to deal tactfully with, and to teach skilfully, persons who are ignorant of the subject which she desires to impress upon them.

Again, nurses who go to the outposts of the Empire, and have to deal alone with critical and dangerous emergencies, and to maintain standards of hygiene amongst people having little knowledge of their meaning, must be as proficient, if not more so, as those working at home under easier conditions.

The method of dealing with pupils in training of varying mental abilities is not by a levelling down of standards to meet the requirements of the least proficient, but a levelling up by wisely regulated instruction. To take the example of undergraduates at a university, those who are weak in a special subject, or in general subjects, do not hope that an examination will be made easier to suit their ignorance; such a hope would indeed be vain. They obtain a coach, and endeavour by every means in their power to work up to the required standard.

Why should not the same principle be applied to the more backward probationers, by special individual attention in the training schools, or by an outside coach? The days of 14 hours on duty are over, and, with an 8-hours day in the wards in view, a backward probationer has time for extra instruction on lines advised—if not provided for—by her Matron and training school teachers.

In the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations there are certain subjects in which a candidate must pass. The less brilliant concentrate on these subjects. Others with greater talents, take additional voluntary subjects and, by securing additional marks for these papers, may obtain admission to the Honours List. Some such method might easily be adopted in regard to nursing students. But one thing must be maintained, the one portal of admission to the State Register, at the expiration of the term of grace, through a minimum standard examination passed by all.

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