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ETHEL GORDON FENWICK, S.R.N., HON. EDITOR 1888—1947.

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Editorial.

Rake's Progress.

THERE ARE FEW OF US who are not familiar with the B.B.C.'s famous programme, "In Town Tonight"—. Suddenly, amidst the roar of London's traffic a voice of authority rings out its commanding "Stop!", and immediately the hooters, whistles, sirens, engines and even the people's voices are hushed, and a great stillness is broadcast on the ether.

Oh, for a voice to ring out its dramatic order "Stop!" in the affairs of the Profession of Nursing! For sooner or later a halt must be called, if only to give us time to think quietly and in peace, and enable us to discover whither we are going. For, almost before we have had time to shake down and get used to a new method of training our Nurses, and nursing our patients, another fashion is thrust upon us and we are thus obstructed in our progress to success.

There is no peace, no rest, no order or pattern and no continuity in our daily professional lives; and what is worse—amidst all the vogues of training thrust upon us—no really successful one has emerged. Since the war we've experienced the "block" system, the "shift" system, the "intensive course," the "study day" system, the "new basic" system, and now the "regional group" system; and, which is even more pernicious, a new type of General Nursing Council, where our precious majority, wielding statutory powers, has been dissolved. In addition, oral state examinations have disappeared, and a fuller syllabus of teaching is on the march. And thus we go on and on, ever changing; making no progress; shifting now here, and now there. Nor is this condition peculiar to our country alone. It is found in the United States of America and on the Continent.

There is no shadow of doubt that all these abortive efforts are made with the splendid intentions of their sponsors. Just as is paved the way to hell!! Why is it, that in spite of all these titanic, even atomic efforts, success evades us and no progress is evident? Can failure be in any way linked with the type of spirit which stalks abroad amongst our peoples, that spirit of getting as much as one can, freely, or with a minimum of effort?

Expensive post-graduate careers are now open to Registered Nurses free of cost, whereby they may learn modern methods of Ward Management and Administration from a comfortable desk and persuasive teachers, instead of in the hard school of experience. One hears of cases like the following, which is not rare: A Nurse may want a change, and as good posts are plentiful, and good candidates to fill them are scarce,

a change is a simple matter. Thus a Registered Nurse, of no outstanding ability, decides she would like to teach others, and answers an advertisement from a good School of Nursing which requires a Sister-Tutor. She informs her Matron-to-be that she is interested "in the block system," and although inexperienced would "love" to teach. With faint qualms on Matron's part she is duly accepted, and later taught thoroughly how to arrange "blocks" and how to teach. Just when she shows signs of being useful in the school, she decides that teaching is not really her vocation and she wants to learn administration for a large hospital. Could she be seconded to a College for a year, please? Which means, will the hospital which has taught her to teach, now give her one year's salary, whilst she goes to College to learn administration, so that she can improve her salary and status in another hospital? Can audacity or ignorance go further? Yes, for she can apply to the Minister for this secondment, and the hospital to which she owes so much must pay her a year's salary for no reward whatsoever, whilst she learns, in comfort, the intricacies of administration!

Such practices cannot bring progress, stability and serenity into our ranks. With loss of self-respect, we lose the respect of all others. Already discipline is reduced to a mockery; hours of work are so shortened that our young nursing students are acquiring trained status in half the time of those who trained before the war. Thus they are less mature in judgment, less experienced in nursing skills, and consequently less able to accept and carry responsibilities which are required of State Registered Nurses. Owing to the prevailing conditions in our economic and industrial environment, many well-paid vacancies in our particular profession are easy to obtain, and thus nurses may flit hither and thither wherever their fancies may take them; so we suffer shortages, inefficiencies and frustrations until our cup is full and running over.

And—the last straw which breaks the camel's back, is the constant and insidious filching of the privileges and prestige rightly belonging to the Senior Nursing appointments, which is plain to be seen by even those of less intelligence. Young nurses reason that there is no need to bother reading for the higher posts, for they are not worth the effort!

Surely the time has come for us to call a halt and cease experimenting in our Nursing Schools? Cannot we settle down for five or ten years and set our house in order, and evolve a good, sound, uniform method of training students, out of the welter of schemes now before us? Should we not cease "casting pearls . . ." and insist that our trained Nurses earn, by diligent scholarship, their free places in the various luxurious

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