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Editorial.

A Rose by any Other Name.

SO HERE WE ARE, after nearly thirty years of State Registration, trying to find an answer to the thorny questions: What is Nursing? and what constitutes a Nurse? Sometime, in the not too distant future, our leaders (if we have any), will be asked to define Nursing, and unless they are well prepared with a clear exposition of the term, they will fail.

There was a time, not so very long ago, when the senior members of our Profession, who were in intimate contact with Florence Nightingale and her immediate trainees, had no doubt whatsoever about what a Nurse and her duties were. Later, in the first twenty years of this turbulent century, another great woman and Nurse, the late Ethel Gordon Fenwick, had the most concrete ideas on the character and duties of the Nurse. So much so, that she spent her precious energies and enlightened mind obtaining legal status and State recognition, both for the Nurse and her professional labours.

Ethel Gordon Fenwick knew unerringly the type of woman who would present herself for training. Possessed as she was, of a brilliant, penetrating intellect, embellished by education and a profound insight and wisdom, she knew that the rank and file of the Profession would be drawn from the class of women whose actions would be limited by an average intelligence, overwhelming duties and dependence on a salary to such an extent that she might suffer the evils of exploitation, rather than risk offending the powers-that-be, and so lose her career. Therefore, with the innate instinct of the strong, coming to the rescue of weaker brethren, she bent her energies, spent her wealth and influenced her powerful friends to help her get the Nurses' Act of 1919 on to the Statute Book.

Thus the State Registered Nurse was safeguarded, and her duties defined, and one portal of entry only to our Profession was established.

This was truly a tremendous achievement, literally wrested from a hostile government, and in spite of the antagonistic efforts of a jealous and outraged Medical Profession! So long, bitter and difficult was the struggle, and so great was the prize, that the drama of it should be forever enshrined in our Nursing History and lasting fame be awarded to its illustrious architect—Ethel Gordon Fenwick. State Registered Nurses too, should have guarded their privileges almost with their life's blood!

What they really did with their privileges we shall see, and—as a result they should hang their heads in shame and pronounce themselves the most spineless and foolish company of professional women ever to exist. The plain

truth is that Registered Nurses—generally speaking—are not called to be companions and associates of great women like the peerless Florence Nightingale and the richly-endowed, matchless Ethel Gordon Fenwick. By their stupid and criminal actions in throwing away the spoils of an honourable victory, they are condemned to be pawns and minions in the plots and plans of ruthless masters.

Our first act of idiocy was to place a so-called second grade of "Assistant Nurse" in open competition with us, to protect her financially and legally within the confines of our Professional Fold. We allowed her to invade the sacrosanct portals of the General Nursing Council and we, poor fools, allowed our monies to be spent in setting up a "Roll," furnishing offices, and providing her with "assessors" who would admit her to the style and title of "State enrolled-assistant-Nurse." Thus was our invasion begun and now infiltration is fast becoming complete.

In vain did Mrs. Bedford Fenwick warn us of the follies of our retrograde activities. In vain she foretold of the "hierarchies below hierarchies" which would be created as a result of this false and utterly degenerate step. By the mercy of Providence she has been spared witnessing the shameful mutilation of our Statutory Body, the General Nursing Council! No longer have we a self-appointed ruling majority there, watching our interests, but only a subversive instrument of the State, powerless to govern and protect us, merely a feeble mouthpiece of the Ministry of Health!

Can we really be surprised that the shortage of intelligent young women to our ranks grows more menacing, and that a grave danger lies at the heart of the new Health Act? Well equipped girls of today are the much sought-after raw material of many professions, and they will look around and choose a career which will bring them true status and ennobled citizenship. They will want the best—just that, and unless we can re-create all we have spurned, we shall not have the best to offer them.

As a result of our "playing to the politicians," and of our spineless conduct in allowing our privileges to be outrageously filched, we are now witnessing the sorry spectacle of the exploitation of young maidens between the tender ages of 15 years and 17 years, and using them in our hospitals as "Cadets," in order to obtain pitifully elementary services for our sick people. Jobs are invented for them, and they are paid out of all proportion to their experienced and sorely tried professional comrades, who are asked to listen patiently to schemes to "protect" these girls (and their patients) from their inexperienced ministrations! Can stupidity go further, and must we endure it?

Is it too late for us to put our foot down and state

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