

# The Nursing Record

"QUI NON PROFICIT, DEFICIT."

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Communications relating to the Literary Department, Books, Pamphlets, &c., for Review, &c., must be addressed to the Editor of the *Nursing Record*, St. Dunstan's House, Fetter Lane, London, E.C. The Editor will not undertake to return rejected MSS. unless accompanied with a sufficiently stamped addressed envelope.

Correspondents are requested to write on one side of the paper only, and give their real names and addresses, not necessarily as signatures to their letters, but as a guarantee of good faith. Unless this rule be strictly adhered to, no notice will be taken of such communications.

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## EDITORIAL.

FROM several communications which we have received from our readers we are led to believe that much misconception exists as to the real meaning of "Registration." We propose, therefore, as shortly and as simply as possible, to explain what the term means, what it is, and what it will do for nurses.

In the first place, then, to answer the question—"What does the Registration of Nurses mean?" Let us explain the position at present by a short reference to what the registration of medical men is, and how it was brought into force.

From all time there have been doctors, but till the fifteenth century there were no recognised medical examinations in England, and anyone could call himself a doctor, and practise as such without let or

hindrance. Then was founded the Royal College of Physicians in London, to examine and certificate as physicians those who showed sufficient skill and knowledge. From time to time since then other Corporations or Universities have been empowered by law to examine and grant qualifications in medicine and surgery. But though the numbers of those thus qualified to practise increased and multiplied, there still remained thousands of *quacks*—by which, of course, we mean men who were not possessed of any recognized medical degree or diploma conferred after examination. So the question frequently arose as to whether any given person were really a qualified medical man or not. Finally, to afford the public a ready and a certain means of answering this question, and at the same time to protect it against unqualified practitioners, Acts of Parliament were passed in 1858 and 1860, forming a State Book, directing that the names of all qualified medical men should be enrolled therein, and that this should be called "The Medical Register." It further provided that no one not thus registered should be able to hold public appointments, sign legal certificates, recover fees, or obtain other legal rights and privileges. It is, therefore, now imperative upon all qualified medical men at once to register their degrees or diplomas; and this Medical Register, which is published yearly, is simply a State guarantee to the public that every man whose name appears there is fully qualified to practise medicine and surgery.

That is simply what registration of nurses would be—a guarantee to the medical profession and the public that every nurse whose name is found on the register is qualified by training and knowledge to tend the sick efficiently. Nothing more and nothing less.

Then comes the important question, "How is this Register of Nurses to be formed, and by whom is it to be controlled?"

As we have just said, the Medical Register was formed by Acts of Parliament, and its control was placed in the hands of a body of representative medical men, under the title of "The General Medical Council for the United Kingdom." Evidently with this precedent before its eyes, our greatly esteemed and powerful contemporary

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