

prevent nurses who may be without knowledge or moral character being cited as 'trained nurses.'

The scandal has been hushed up for some little time out of respect for the president of the Association. The president is H.R.H. Princess Christian. But affairs have come to a crisis, and to sit down with philosophic calm under the mismanagement of the Association can be brooked no longer.

Side by side there now appears the joint protest of the Central Council of the Incorporated Medical Practitioners' Association and of an influential group of hospital matrons. Let us see the nature and extent of

THE ALLEGATIONS.

- (1) That the founders of the Association have been dishonestly excluded from the General Council.
- (2) That when the leading nurses were removed from the governing body an attempt was made to intimidate the rank and file.
- (3) That the officials packed the General Council with nurses from the Middlesex Hospital and the Chelsea Workhouse Infirmary. This year no fewer than 34 members of the General Council are connected with these two small institutions.
- (4) That the expenditure of the Association during the last three years has been allowed annually to exceed its reliable income by several hundred pounds, with the result that a national work is being rapidly ruined.
- (5) That criticism of the existing management is stifled at the meetings of the Association.
- (6) That the organ of the Association is used for the publication of personal attacks on members differing from the officials."

"CHAT WITH A 'STAR' MAN.

The allegations given above are obviously of the gravest character. In order to ascertain the circumstances under which they arose, a 'Star' Man last evening called on one of the ladies prominently identified with the Nurses' Association. Matters had reached a serious crisis, she said. And then she started the story from the beginning. More than ten years ago many London hospital matrons interested themselves in the nursing profession and its claims. Fifty of them met and laid the foundation of the British Nurses' Association, whose programme embraced schemes for securing better education for nurses, the establishment of a voluntary system of registration, and the provision of pensions and holiday homes as well.

In the early stage of the movement doctors were invited to help, and the most enlightened among them came forward. Some of the doctors were of the utmost assistance, but of course nurses were the employed and doctors were employers, and where the interests of the employer held sway the interests of the employed generally went to the wall.

THE DOCTORS' PLOT.

In 1893 the Association was granted a Royal Charter. The Charter conferred strong powers upon the nurses, and this terrified the very men who had helped the matrons to win it. Then some of the timorous and most narrow-minded of the medical men set themselves by a deliberate plan to rob the nurses of their authority and appropriate it for themselves. A

dozen of the more independent of the matrons stoutly opposed them, but the officials brought forward bye-laws, which they passed regardless of what the women might say or do. By a quibble in the bye-laws they managed in 1895 to dismiss from the General Council the matrons who founded the Association, though they could not turn them off the executive committee. The controlling officials then pursued such a policy of intimidation that many of the matrons declined to have anything to do with the association.

UNDER THE SHELTER OF ROYALTY.

'What had Princess Christian to say to all this?'

'Her Royal Highness was simply used to enforce the views of the officials,' was the reply. 'It was always the Princess who was represented as responsible for whatever scheme was presented. If anyone dared to oppose she was met with the retort, 'Oh, you're insulting the Princess.' H.R.H. was placed in an absolutely false position.'

'Why has there been so much delay in exposing it all?'

'Partly, no doubt for the sake of the Princess.'

THE FUTURE.

'And what of the future?'

'Well, the Executive Committee of five has been sitting for two years framing fresh Bye-laws meant to deprive nurses of the privileges that remain to them. Under the new rules the Princess would appoint the officers, the members of the Council, and the executive would be reduced by one-third, and the concern would become an absolute autocracy. They would try to get the Bye-laws legally confirmed, and to do that they would have to go to the Privy Council. The matrons rely upon the press to assist them. When once public attention is called to the system of mismanagement we hoped the last would be heard of it. Questions will be asked in the House, and the matrons are going to demand a public inquiry.'

Progress in the United States.

THE annual graduating exercises of the pupils of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, at Baltimore, mark an epoch in nursing progress.

This gathering celebrated the close of the first year's course in the Training School since a three years' term of training was inaugurated. It also marks the first year of the presentation of 100 dols. scholarships in those attaining the best general record. Those pupils of the first year course receiving them are:—

Scholarships.—Miss Josephine Coffin, Miss Katherine Fitch, Miss Margaret McKinnon, Miss Jessie McCallum, and Miss May Sullivan.

Honourable Mention for Excellent Work and Marked Improvement.—Miss Frances Ames, Miss Mary Douthat, Miss Florence Hunt, and Miss Florence Colburn.

We wonder how long it will be before English nurses will have the opportunity of gaining a scholarship?

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)