

In 1895, I proposed the following resolution at a meeting of the Matrons' Council, and it was seconded by Miss Rogers, of Leicester:—"That the Matrons' Council approves of the principle of preliminary education for nurses in the elements of anatomy, physiology, therapeutics, antiseptics, hygiene, practical nursing, and dietetics, invalid cooking, domestic ward management, and professional etiquette, and that they request that the Royal British Nurses Association will take into consideration the development of the scheme."

This resolution was forwarded to the Royal British Nurses' Association, and the Executive Committee of that Society declined to accede to our request, giving as an excuse the following statement made in reply to the Petitioners against the Royal Charter—"The Association disavows any desire, and the Charter will give no power, to 'regulate and control the training and education of the whole body of Nurses' or to interfere in any way with the Nurse Training Schools."

As we had asked for the inauguration of a voluntary preliminary course of education, thereby carrying out the very first clause of the Charter which says the Association was established for "the improvement of the profession of nursing," and as this did not affect the Nurse Training Schools in any way, the answer was most irrelevant, and merely the excuse of the *non-possumus* policy of the medical members,—expressed in the now-proverbial "Pooh! Pooh!" But we must decline to be airily pooh-poohed.

Again, as we are all aware, there have been cases of gross intimidation of nurse members for exercising their legal rights.

The Matron's protests have been suppressed.

The Journal has been handed over to a partisan minority—and due discussion in it suppressed—and finally a new code of bye-laws have been drawn up by a Committee, composed exclusively of the Hon. Officers, depriving the nurse members of all practical power of self-government.

The Royal British Nurses' Association, therefore, as at present managed, is a constant menace to the liberty and progress of nurses, and as such will doubtless have to be taken into consideration in any future legislation for their benefit.

The only other professional Association of Nurses is the Matrons' Council—a Society the members of which must be trained nurses holding the position of Matron or Superintendent of nursing in a hospital, and whose objects are briefly as follows:—

(1) To enable Members to take council together upon matters affecting their profession.

(2) To bring about a uniform system of education, examination, certification, and State Registration for Nurses in British Hospitals.

(3) To form an Advisory Committee, to which

Members can apply in cases of professional difficulty.

(4) To hold Conferences to discuss subjects of professional and also of general interest.

(5) To encourage Members to understand the methods of procedure at meetings.

So that, after ten years' work, owing to systematic opposition upon the part of interested persons, very little has been done to organize nurses into a united, and, therefore, a powerful professional body. That is the great work which lies before us in the future, and which, in spite of the discouragements met with in the past, will, I feel sure, inspire the more thoughtful amongst us to strenuous and renewed efforts in the future. One thing, of course, we cannot recognise as the least possible, and that is, ultimate failure. But we live in a tight little Conservative island—chock full of prejudices—and governed systematically by party politics, and we must not forget that we women are an outcast class—forming with the unhappy lunatic, the impotent pauper, the incarcerated criminal, a quartette of—in one word—the Disfranchised.

Under all these adverse circumstances, to tackle the future will, no doubt, require heroic effort—but we have a shining example away in the West—and what American women can do, can also be accomplished by British women. Where duty calls, we must follow.

I need not emphasize the necessity that we should be firm at this juncture, how necessary it is that the true interests of our profession should be jealously guarded by us, and how all important that we should prove ourselves possessed of that fine courage which can look a reverse of fortune straight in the face, and go on working for a principle. With advocates thus inspired, a righteous cause, is absolutely certain to succeed in the end. Nothing can withstand the combination of conscience and courage. In the past, we British nurses have not commanded success, because we were not strong enough to demand it. We have not proved ourselves worthy. So much for the past. But the future shows a clean page. Let us leave our mark upon it.

#### A STANDARD OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION.

Starting from the fact that at the present time there is no organisation of the profession, I would explain, briefly, the views which I have for some years advocated upon this subject. In the first place, I consider that every woman who desires to be recognised as a trained nurse, must be prepared to pass through a definite and organised curriculum of education to fit her for the duties and responsibilities which will devolve upon her, as a member of an honourable public profession; in the same way in which men make it the chief

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