

## A PROTEST.

We referred last week to a letter of protest addressed by Miss Lloyd Still, Matron of St. Thomas' Hospital, and Miss Amy Hughes, in the June issue of the *American Journal of Nursing*, against an article by Miss L. L. Dock entitled "English Nursing Politics," which they state was based on a biased account in *THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING* of the present condition of the Nursing World in England.

The two ladies think it right American nurses should hear both sides; so do we.

They claim that the College of Nursing, Ltd. came into existence as a result of the great lack of uniformity, and (in many instances) the lack of efficiency in the training of nurses, and state that its avowed objects are to obtain (1) State Registration for the trained nurses, (2) the protection of the interests of trained nurses, (3) the raising of the standard of training, (4) the establishment of a uniform curriculum of training and the one-portal examination, (5) the establishment of lectureships and scholarships.

Whose the fault for this deplorable condition of affairs, that all these reforms have not long ago been instituted? Certainly not that of the State Registration Party, who have called urgently for one and all through their organ, *THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING*, for thirty years but of the lay governors of hospitals, and Matrons like Miss Lloyd Still, who have opposed by every means in their power the organisation of trained nursing education, and registration through an Act of Parliament, and who have signed manifestoes without end to Members of Parliament and the public, stating that:—

"We believe that any system of State Registration would be detrimental to the public, and harmful to the nurses themselves," and further

"A State Register of Nurses, far from being a security, to the public, would be an actual source of danger."

No, the College did not come into existence to effect the State Registration of Nurses. It came into existence to attempt to circumvent State Registration by a voluntary system of Registration controlled by the employers of nurses, and only recanted when its promoters found we State Registrationists had, by thirty years' work and the expenditure of upwards of £20,000, convinced the country and the legislators of the justice of our cause. Then they adopted the letter of registration law without its spirit.

We claim a just Bill, incorporating self-determination and self-government. The College Company and its nominees have denied this fundamental basis of good government and have attempted to thrust a Bill upon us incorporating a lay company and its tyrannical Constitution as the General Nursing Council of our profession. The College has the support of the laity who control the large Nursing Schools and Nursing

Institutions, the Anti-Registration Party; their Bill is inspired by some of the most subtle anti-feminists in our midst, and their claim that the government of the College is democratic is, presumably, a huge joke.

Take a few of its provisions:—

2. This Council has power:—

(a) To appoint any persons (whether already members or not) to be members of the Council. (Article 37.)

(b) To exclude from office Matrons of Hospitals or Superintendents of Nursing, Sisters or Nurses who are not engaged in the active practice of their profession. (Article 35.)

(c) To adopt, if thought fit, the results of examinations held by approved Nursing Schools as sufficient evidence of proficiency. (Memo. 3 (D).)

(d) To grant certificates . . . Provided that the College shall not grant or profess to grant titles or diplomas. (Memo. 3 (E).)

(e) To remove from the Register the name or names of any person or persons as the Council may in its discretion think proper. (Memo. 3 (J).)

We claim professional independence.

We take exception to the appeal made by the British Women's Hospital Committee because (1) as professional women we object to be made the objects of a War Charity by a self-appointed committee of Society women and actresses who know nothing of our professional needs, (2) because to endow a lay Company of employers, the College of Nursing, Ltd., with unlimited funds means the subjugation of the class of working women they are attempting to control, and we object to our independence being bought up.

Enough. Our American readers will not have far to seek to realise our claim that if these anti-registrationists are converted and truly penitent for their unreasoning obstruction to nursing reform in past years, and its consequent injury to the sick, and are prepared to refund to working women the £20,000 they have spent in conscientious agitation, they could prove their *bona fides* by evincing sympathy with our professional aspirations, without adopting our programme, and claiming it as their own.

The truth is the attitude of the Governors and officials of our Nurse-Training Schools is British to the backbone. We are in the aggregate creatures of habit, a dull, worthy, unimaginative people, but we are credited with being honest.

The founders of the College must repent them of their stupidity before they can hope to inspire confidence in those whose ideas they have exploited with such avidity.

Miss Lloyd Still and Miss Amy Hughes are much respected ladies, but their environment is circumscribed. They look down on mere mortals from the heights of Olympus.

We claim a fair field and no favour.

We will not be cooped up in the College compound.

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