

The British College of Nurses,
431, Oxford Street,
London, W.1.
March 30th, 1927.

DEAR MADAM,—Your letter of March 4th addressed to the President was placed before the Council of the British College of Nurses at its Meeting on Saturday, March 26th.

My Council took serious exception to your repeated accusation of ignorance upon the part of their Secretary of the Articles of Association of the College of Nursing, Ltd., which were quoted in its official letter of March 1st, and desire that I should convey to you their disapproval in this connection.

Your statement that lay and Medical members of the Council of that organisation act merely in an "advisory" capacity, and that therefore the College of Nursing, Ltd., is a self-governing body is disproved by reference to the Memorandum and Articles of Association of that body, which constitutes every person elected to its Council an active member of the College with voting power.

This power conferred upon persons, other than members of a constituent profession, in the opinion of my Council, deprives the members of such a profession of the power of self-government.

I am,
Yours faithfully,
(Signed) GRACE REYNOLDS HALE,
Secretary.

Miss Lloyd Still, C.B.E., R.R.C.,
The Matron,
St. Thomas's Hospital.

THE DIPLOMA OF THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES.

Knowledge, Service, Charity and Honour. These are the Watchwords—the ideals—which the British College of Nurses will place before its Fellows and Members on the Diploma which they will receive at the hands of the President on Diploma Day, April 29th, at the Church House, Westminster, S.W. The Diploma is printed on Japanese Vellum, and bears the Seal of the College, the head of the first President, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, and it is surrounded by a Scroll of Honour, on which are inscribed names familiar to all our readers of those who have rendered outstanding service to Nursing and Nurses in the Mother Country and in the Overseas Dominions.

In four panels are the names of Florence Nightingale, Ethel Fenwick, Rebecca Strong and Margaret Huxley, and on the ribbon which connects the panels those of Elizabeth Fry, Agnes Jones, Isla Stewart, Margaret Breay, Helen Pearse, Gertrude Rogers, Mary Cureton, Christina Forrest, Cassandra Beachcroft, Helen Borden, Grace Neill, Henrietta Stockdale, Martha Farquharson, Catherine Loch, and Janet Thorpe.

This is not the place to enumerate in detail the magnificent services they have rendered to the Nursing Profession and the community, a volume would not be sufficient for their narration. But it will at once be recognised that the names include those of women, who, over a long term of years, were foremost in promoting by personal service, and financial support, the organisation of nurses and the standardisation of Nursing Education, under State Authority in Great Britain and throughout the Empire.

THE PANELS.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE, O.M.

The name of Florence Nightingale is known and honoured throughout the world as the heroine of the Crimea, and it is impossible to over-estimate the value of her work for sick and wounded soldiers in that distressful war. Yet that, after all, occupied a short span of her life, and her great claim to her niche in the Temple of Fame rests upon

her unquestioned place as the Law-Giver of the Nursing Profession. Many famous women had preceded her, whose devotion to the sick could not be excelled, but Miss Nightingale, with crystal clearness, and often in pungent phrases, reduced the practice of nursing to a science, and defined the basis upon which it should be built up, so that, for all time, these basic principles will hold good. Every nurse should possess her "Notes on Nursing," of which a cheap reprint (price 1s. 6d.) was published in 1909 by Harrison & Sons, Ltd., now of 45, St. Martin's Lane, London, W.C.2., concerning which she modestly writes in the preface, "They are meant simply to give hints for thought to women who have personal charge of the health of others," and adds words which show her to have been far in advance of her time. "Every day sanitary knowledge, or the knowledge of nursing, or, in other words, of how to put the constitution in such a state as that it will have no disease, or that it can recover from disease, takes a higher place."

Miss Nightingale laid down in connection with the organisation of Training Schools for Nurses, as points of fundamental importance:—(1) The appointment of a Matron who had undergone a thorough training, and was expert as a nurse, to the absolute control of the Nursing; (2) the comfort and moral discipline of the nurses; (3) the careful selection of probationers.

It was on these principles that she based the organisation of the Training School for Nurses which bears her name in connection with St. Thomas's Hospital, when, in 1856, the British people subscribed the sum of £50,000 in grateful recognition of "the noble exertions of Miss Nightingale and her associates" in hospitals in the Crimea.

The Nightingale Training School, when established, served two main purposes—it afforded a demonstration to the authorities of other hospitals as to the methods of nurse-training advocated by Miss Nightingale, and, on the principle that "he who does the work is not so productively engaged as he who multiplies the doers," Miss Nightingale's interest was directed to the education of pupils who, when trained, would be fitted to superintend Nursing Schools in other institutions, and thus increase the output of well-trained nurses, and with whom she kept in close touch.

The raising of the standard of Poor Law Nursing, the establishment of District Nursing, and the improvement of nursing in many directions, also had her keen interest and support, and, though an invalid for many years, she exercised a wide influence in nursing matters during a long life.

The organisation of nurses, as apart from nursing, did not meet with her approval; indeed, she strongly opposed it.

Miss Nightingale received the Royal Red Cross, instituted in 1883, from Queen Victoria, and the Order of Merit in 1907 from King Edward. A year later she received the Honorary Freedom of the City of London, but she was then 88 years of age, and quite unable to attend at the Guildhall to receive this honour, which was accepted by Mr. L. H. Shore Nightingale on her behalf. The City Chamberlain, in making the presentation, expressed the regret of the Corporation that, "owing to some unexplained omission, the Honorary Freedom—the highest honour in the gift of the Corporation—was not conferred upon her by a previous generation half a century ago, when she was in health and strength and able thoroughly to appreciate and enjoy it."

No honours could increase the lustre of her genius, but the regret expressed by the City Chamberlain was well founded—the recognition came too late to be comprehended by Miss Nightingale.

Two years later, with all honour, she was laid to rest in the little churchyard of East Wellow, near Romsey, near the church where she so often worshipped as a girl.

She had inaugurated a new era in nursing, and laid down the fundamental laws upon which the science of nursing must always be developed.

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