

"banners of progress." The matter becomes more serious when the writer states that the Association has hitherto been "merely metropolitan in its influence," for this displays an ignorance on her part of the great work which it has accomplished, and of the number of members which it possesses in every part of the British Empire; and, certainly, such a statement is strangely out of place in the official journal, and voice of the Association. Considering the active part which H.R.H. Princess Christian has taken in the work of the Association, it appears to many to be extremely ungrateful—to say nothing of its bad taste—that the Executive Committee should have permitted the official organ of the Association to attempt to minimise and disparage the influence which the Association has gained. Nurses, at any rate, recognise the great work which their Association has accomplished, even if the Executive Committee permits an anonymous and, presumably, unprofessional writer in the *Nurses' Journal* to state officially that the Association, after seven years' work, is "merely metropolitan in its influence."

The deplorable ignorance of the writer of the article is revealed again and again. It is, for example, totally incorrect to state that "three years of systematic training" for Nurses is "a period approved . . . by the lords of the Privy Council." The lords of the Privy Council have never expressed their opinion upon the matter. It is gravely to be regretted that the Executive Committee should permit such inaccurate and most misleading statements to be officially made in the organ of the Association. The lords of the Privy Council would be quite within their right in publicly stating that the Executive Committee had no authority nor justification for such an assumption of their lordships' views on this much-debated and hotly-contested question. But the writer further states that this period of training is "approved . . . by the teachers (*sic*) of the Medical and Nursing profession." This phrase has naturally mystified many of our correspondents, and on their behalf we venture to ask the Editor of the *Nurses' Journal*, to inform the "Medical and Nursing profession" who the said "teachers" are? Failing such explanation, we must assume that the expression is the sheer nonsense which most of our correspondents appear to consider it. Then the writer of this article, after again depreciating the work accomplished by the Association, indulges in a very slightly veiled sneer at the influence possessed by those who now constitute the Executive Committee. She narrates, in somewhat unnecessary detail, how a letter was sent from the Committee to forty-two lady superintendents in provincial towns, "inviting them to assist to form (*sic*) preliminary

meetings in their respective towns." As the result of these mountainous efforts, she states that *three* preliminary meetings will be arranged during the coming autumn! We have information which leads us to doubt whether even these few gatherings will take place. It must be assumed that the Executive Committee view this *fiasco* with complacency, or they would hardly have sanctioned its announcement. But the fact itself is sufficiently significant, and proves beyond dispute what the leading Nurse members think of the present management of their Association. We have no hesitation in saying that, if such a letter had gone to these ladies two years ago, there would be many kind promises of assistance received within three days. It would be surprising if the Executive Committee do not appreciate the meaning of the failure. The writer of the article under discussion, at any rate, understands it. She realises that the Provincial Matrons, without whose aid nothing can be done, are holding aloof; and, as the only possible alternative, she writes that, in order to form local centres, "a certain leaven of lay help seems a necessity."

*A leaven of lay help!*

That a number of professional men and women—who have, with the help of their honoured President, achieved by themselves unequalled success in the face of unequalled difficulties; who have been recognised as the representative body of British Nurses by a Royal Commission, and by Her Majesty's Privy Council; who have brought about Nursing legislation in a great British colony; who have promoted improvements in a hundred public hospitals—need "a leaven of lay help." No wonder the Nursing world is indignant at the official pronouncements of the *Nurses' Journal*; while the ladies who, it is suggested, should supply the "leaven" and draw Nurses together for tea parties and similar dissipation, are now being talked of throughout the country as "the Muffin Belles." Indeed, as one valued correspondent says, "it is impossible to gravely discuss the scheme now officially set forth by the Executive Committee of the Royal British Nurses' Association."

We will recur to this matter next week; and content ourselves now with pointing out that one result of all the machinations which have recently taken place—the removal from the General Council of the women who founded the Association—has been this: that the officials, are not receiving the help of the members in their unpractical proposals, and are now sinking with the very foundation principles of the Association—its professional constitution and character—desperately clinging to the delusive straw of "a little leaven of lay help."

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