

the Association, in the first six years of its existence, achieved success after success. Its financial position grew stronger every year—it carried out one scheme after another with advantage to the Nurses and with credit to itself. Finally, and despite immense and most powerful opposition, it gained a Royal Charter. In all that work “a small clique of persons” took little or no part, and therefore for the success which was achieved the Association has little cause for gratitude to them. As soon, however, as the Charter was gained, the invariable result followed. Persons who had carefully abstained from taking part in the previous struggles, hastily appeared on the scene of victory. And, as is also not unusual, it was not long before the latter endeavoured to oust those who had borne the heat and burden of the previous fighting, and attempted to take all the credit to themselves for a success which they themselves had done so little to secure. History furnishes many illustrations of persons possessed of some mental abilities, who have been able to persuade themselves and others that they could wear the lion’s skin without too plainly revealing the lengthy ears of a less distinguished animal; but it really requires some ability to act this part.

To point the moral of the fable in the present case, it is only necessary to state what has occurred in consequence of the attempted usurpation of authority by “a small clique of persons” in the Royal British Nurses’ Association. They have made the grave financial mistake of spending more than the Association possessed. Two appeals to the members, and a bazaar to raise money, were found necessary in 1894, and it is an open secret that at the present moment the Association is destitute of funds. Meanwhile, muddle has followed muddle, and failure followed failure, until the Association has lost the respect even of its friends. Let us take, for example, two of the schemes which were sanctioned by the General Council, and entrusted to the Executive Committee to carry out. It was announced with a flourish of trumpets, in 1894, that the Association was about to organise a reserve of Nurses for service in times of war. Where is that body now? It has never been heard of since. The Association at the same time started very valuable courses of Educational Lectures. After a few months, the General Council were informed that these had been a

financial failure, and the Council were besought to discontinue them. Three months afterwards, the Executive Committee advised that the lectures should be started again, and once more the Council consented. The General Council last month was requested by the Executive Committee to rescind the Resolution passed in October, which rescinded the Resolution passed in July, which rescinded the Resolution passed a year before, which authorised the lectures to be given. The House That Jack Built was simplicity itself to these proceedings; but the crowning absurdity was reached when the Executive Committee gravely declared that the scheme recommended by them to, and sanctioned by, the General Council in 1894, converted into a fiasco in 1895, and into a final muddle in 1896, was actually beyond the authority of the Association to carry out at all! And this, in the face of the patent fact that the Royal Charter expressly defines the promotion of such Lectures as one of the “Powers” conferred upon the Association.

The pity of it is, that it is well known that other Societies, without a tithe of the prestige of the Association, make such lectures most useful to the public, and most remunerative to themselves. No better proof of the entire incapacity of the “small clique of persons” could be advanced than their failure to carry out even such a simple and profitable scheme as that of Educational Lectures.

So much for the failure of the “small clique”—in striking contrast, as we have seen, to the previous successful management of the Association, when in different hands. A few words will illustrate the accuracy of Sir Dyce Duckworth’s statement that this small clique have “striven to wrest the management of the Association from the general body, and to place it in their own hands.”

The members, last year, desired to have a Special General Meeting of the Corporation, and in strict accordance with the Charter and Bye-laws they sent in a Requisition to that effect. The right was refused to them—a legal right and privilege, conferred by the Charter, was wrested from the general body by the “small clique.” And again, a matter of vital importance to the Corporation occurred. Proceedings had taken place in the High Court of Chancery, where the Corporation had, by the action of this “small clique,” been put to very heavy costs. The facts were deliberately kept back from the governing body, and when

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