

Charter had been gained ; that is to say, when the initial difficulties of Registration had been overcome, and when external opposition to the Association had become a matter of no importance.

As a matter of fact, however, some two years and a half ago the then Treasurer felt compelled to resign his office, on the ground that extravagant expenditure was being incurred which exceeded the income of the Association, and for which, therefore, he could not hold himself responsible. His warnings were unheeded, and, from that time, the financial condition of the Association has steadily progressed from bad to worse. In December, 1894, it was found necessary to have a Bazaar in order to pay off the debts that had been accumulated, while two appeals for financial help had been made in the preceding seven months. Donations were promised for three years, to the extent of about £150 a year, and this year those donations expire ; but the financial condition is more deplorable than ever. In 1894, the then Treasurer estimated that the donations promised would be sufficient to carry the Association over its difficulties, but during the last financial year no less than £800 has been spent beyond the reliable income. Efforts are now being again made to obtain further assistance, and it is being said that "the real friends of the Association" are subscribing for this purpose. We venture to say that the real friends of the Association are those who demand that the expenditure of the Association shall be kept within its income, as it formerly was, and that they are not true friends of the Association who assist in perpetuating a bad financial system by introducing and bolstering up the indefensible principle that extravagance on the part of the officials may be met by making the Corporation of Nurses an object of public charity.

Nurses, for the most part, are self-respecting women who work for their own livelihood, and are proud to do so. We feel confident that they desire that the same principle of independence should characterise their professional Association ; and we have good reason for saying that a very bitter feeling is being aroused by the action of the officials in subverting that principle. If the subscriptions of the benevolent were asked for, and given, for any charitable work of the Association, it would be a totally different matter. But it is difficult to believe that even

the most generous would approve of their benefactions to the Association being used, not for any purposes of benefit to the Nurses, but actually for their detriment. That may seem a hard saying, but its accuracy is easily proved. The gifts recently given to the Association, as reported at the last General Council Meeting, must be employed to lighten the load of debt on the Association, which has not been incurred on account of schemes beneficial to the members. This indebtedness would be serious enough if it stood alone, but it involves an even greater evil, because, as a consequence, the members are losing their rightful independence. The Association is now every month sinking deeper in financial difficulties ; that is to say, every month the Corporation is being rendered more and more dependent upon external charity. Those who pay the debts of the Corporation have some justification for expecting that they shall be permitted to rule it ; and so it has come to this, that the control is being taken away from the members, and given over into the hands of a small group of officials, simply because the Nurses cannot pay for the official extravagance of which they constantly and bitterly complain, while the officials evidently hope to find friends who will do so.

We are not surprised, therefore, to find that a feeling of indignation is strongly expressed, especially amongst the leaders of the Nursing profession, against the half-dozen gentlemen who have usurped authority in their own Association, who are injuring their Corporation, and who are bringing it into undeserved public disrepute. Members who maintain their self-respect, who desire that their Association shall be managed honourably, and who consider that it is as dishonourable for a Corporation, as it is for an individual, to incur debts which it or he has no probability of paying, formulate the demand that the expenditure of the Royal British Nurses' Association shall be at once reduced to, and kept within, its income as it formerly was, and that the Nurse members be no longer discredited as they are at present, by such financial straits as those to which the Association is at present reduced.

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