

shortly to have the pleasure of publishing this document in these columns. In brief, the criticism exposes the manner in which the officials seek to obtain uncontrolled and absolute authority over the Association. The Executive Committee, it will be observed, instead of being as hitherto, large and most representative, is made by the new Bye-Laws into a small body which is entirely unrepresentative of the leaders of the medical and nursing profession; and, furthermore, for the first time it is provided that the members of the Committee should be eligible for perpetual re-election. In fact, the ruling body of the Association is converted into a little permanent ring, whose members would be merely the nominees and automata of the officials.

The *ex-officio* matrons, that is to say, the heads of the chief Nurse Training Schools in the Kingdom, who for ten years have had the right to permanent seats upon the Committee, are now swept off that body—the definite promises to, and the agreement made with, those ladies being deliberately broken—a breach of faith which, if sanctioned, will for ever reflect the greatest discredit on the Association. Some of the nurse-members have actually been persuaded that the constitution has been altered so as to give greater representation to the nurses than before. Whereas a moment's comparison of the old with the new Bye-Laws proves that the representation is not only diminished but is reduced to an absolute farce.

One thing is, at any rate, certain. The matrons of the leading hospitals who, in 1887, were promised and given permanent *ex-officio* seats on the Executive Committee and General Council; who, in 1895, at the instance of Dr. Bezly Thorne, were shuffled off their seats on the General Council; and who, in 1897, at the instance of Sir James Crichton Browne, Mr. Pickering Pick, Mr. John Langton, and Mr. Edward Fardon and Miss Thorold of the Middlesex Hospital, were deprived of their promised seats on the Executive Committee, are not so destitute of common sense, as well as of self-respect, as to regard it as an honour to be now offered a seat on the General Council—to be held at the discretion of the officials. Nor are they likely to believe, for one moment, that the promise of such a seat can be considered as an honourable undertaking. The mischief was done in 1895; it has only been accentuated and emphasized now. The nursing profession knows that,

thanks to the present officials, the pledges and promises of the Royal British Nursing Association are absolutely worthless unless they are couched in legal phraseology and properly sealed, and stamped at Somerset House. It cannot be wondered at that, under these circumstances, the motto of the Association, "Steadfast and True," is regarded throughout the nursing world in bitter mockery and supreme contempt.

### Annotations.

#### WORKHOUSE NURSING.

WE observe in last Tuesday's *Times*, an important letter from the Countess of Lothian, who, from its foundation, has been an ardent supporter of the Workhouse Infirmary Nursing Association, drawing attention to the way in which the recent Local Government Board Order affects the nursing of Workhouse Infirmaries. While fully admitting that the present order in abolishing pauper nursing is greatly in advance of former legislation, Lady Lothian proceeds to point out that there is a very wide loophole for the re-introduction of the untrained, and even of the pauper, element. The loophole exists in the following regulation:—"No pauper inmate shall be employed as an attendant in the sick or lying-in wards, or on any pauper requiring nursing, *unless* such an inmate shall be approved by the medical officer, and shall act under the supervision of a paid officer of the Guardians."

The practical result of this regulation is to introduce *untrained* help into workhouse infirmaries. The guardians of one workhouse have advertised for women as nurses in the following terms:—

"Women from eighteen to twenty-five required as assistant nurses in the workhouse infirmary. Increased attention being given to the nursing of pauper patients, the Workhouse Committee have adopted a new policy, likely to have useful results. The infirmary staff is to be increased on economical lines, not only making adequate provision for the care of patients, but giving an opportunity of useful training in an important branch of nursing work; it is a new departure and deserves success."

It will thus be observed that no conditions of training are required, and, in other unions, Lady Lothian points out that "persons on out relief have been taken in as paid nurses, regardless of the fact that women on out relief are mostly invalids, or aged persons, or widows encumbered with families, etc., without any training. The Workhouse Infirmary Nursing Association found it necessary, after

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