

been treated with the utmost rudeness. Co-operation between medical men and nurses, and, we are sorry to say, in some instances, even Ward Sisters, has had the effect of overriding influence of the Matron with her own nurses, with the disastrous result that the support of leading Matrons—which alone can make the Royal British Nurses' Association a professional success—has been alienated and withdrawn, and that the Association no longer attracts to its ranks the best class of nurses.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

When we consider the constitution of the present Executive Committee of the Royal British Nurses' Association, in which the names of leading Matrons are chiefly conspicuous by their absence—only those who are content to submit to medical domination being found willing under present conditions to accept a seat upon it—it must be realized that an attempt to effect organization on the part of this unrepresentative body is not likely to be conducive to the best interests of the Nursing Profession. We must, moreover, point out that, with regard to the new scheme, the members of the Association will have little or no voice. The fate of those who conscientiously attempt free discussion at Royal British Nurses' Association meetings is now notorious, and the *Journal* (the *Nurses' Journal*!) instead of being edited by a member of the profession, has been placed in the hands of the lay, paid, Secretary of the Association, with the certain result that this official must voice the opinions of the Hon. Officers if she wishes to retain her post.

THE RESULT OF THE SCHEME.

The deliberate policy of the Hon. Officers of the Association in London, thus to minimize the influence of the Matrons in its councils, having been demonstrated, it follows that any tactics adopted by them to influence the country nurses must be regarded with extreme caution. We have no hesitation in earnestly warning the country Matrons to beware of the new scheme. We may consider the effect of the work of a Lady Consul, in Birmingham, as a typical case of a large Provincial Centre. Suppose the lady selected to be the head of a small hospital or Nursing Institution—and the officials will only be following the precedent they have established in London if they select as their representatives ladies holding posts of

minor importance—how will the Matrons of the General and the Queen's Hospitals appreciate having their nurses manipulated and influenced by the Lady Consul, in conjunction with the medical men of the City, and their wives, as exemplified at the recent Café Chantant. It is easy to understand that the position is one which lends itself to serious friction between the Matrons themselves, and we do not think that many influential women in the nursing world are likely to place themselves in so false a position, as to encourage their nursing staff to look for advice from a colleague who has no right to interfere with them.

THE RIGHT LINES.

The lines which must undoubtedly be followed, if useful organization and co-operation of nurses are to be secured, are those laid down by our American colleagues, and which have resulted in the splendid Association, known as the "National Associated Alumnae of the United States and Canada." In this Society, each training school organizes its own association of graduate nurses, and each school Alumnae, accepted as eligible by the Central Association, has a right to select and send its delegate to the meetings of the National Association. This is self-government on professional and self-respecting lines, and lines, which, we believe, must, sooner or later, be adopted in this country. An association founded on this basis, each Matron of a Training School being in sympathy with her School Alumnae, would be a most powerful factor as a professional force; and we do not hesitate to say that nothing is more likely to demonstrate to hospital Matrons the necessity for organising their own Alumnae Associations, if they desire to retain position and prestige in the estimation of their own nurses, than the unwise attempt of the Royal British Nurses' Association to establish Lady Consuls, whose office must either be a sinecure or one productive of professional friction and incessant disputes.

The first step to be taken in the direction of Associated Alumnae is the organization of the School Alumnae, and it is natural and fitting that the initiative in pointing out to their graduate nurses the desirability of such societies should be taken by the Matrons. There is no reason why any school should wait for the establishment of a National Association to found its own Society of Nurses.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)