

### Nursing Politics.

#### "THE VOICE OF THE CHARMER."

WE are sure that Miss Isla Stewart, of St. Bartholomew's, will be surprised to learn from the *Nurses' Journal*, that Miss Wedgewood is stated to have remarked, at the Annual Meeting of the R.B.N.A., in reference to the Army Nursing Reserve, "Among those who had helped most loyally was the Matron of St. Bartholomew's, who contributed many nurses to the Reserve."

This surely conveys the impression that Miss Stewart had been courteously invited to take part in the organization of the work, and had done so. Quite the reverse has been the case. With the exception of Miss Wedgewood, the arrangements for nursing at the front have been entirely organized (?) by doctors and laymen, and scant courtesy has been meted out to the Matrons of our training schools, who have complained, justly, that all they have been asked to do was to supply members of their nursing staffs, desirous of going to South Africa, with a letter, "certifying that she possesses the tact, temper, and ability qualifying her for appointment to the Nursing Service Reserve of the Army." It will here be observed that her *nursing qualifications* are, according to the printed Regulations, to be guaranteed by "the medical officers under whom she has served"!!

Every sort of flattering overture is being fulsomely conveyed from the R.B.N.A. to those Matrons who resigned their connection with the Association, after the insulting breach of faith, in depriving them of their ex-officio seats on the Executive Committee, instigated by Dr. Bezly Thorne, the revision of the Bye-Laws, whereby the nurse members became mere cyphers in their own Association, and the betrayal of the nurses' interests on the vital question of State Registration.

It is widely known that the Matrons left the Executive Committee of the R.B.N.A. under the extreme provocation of personal and professional insults from the various Medical Hon. Officers; and that they were also placed in a most invidious position by the Chairman, Sir James Crichton Browne, over the very disgraceful trickery in relation to the historic "Conference without prejudice." And so long as the medical Hon. Officers who instigated and carried out this questionable policy cling to power in the Royal British Nurses' Association, it is quite certain that those Matrons who know the truth will hold aloof from it.

As President of the Matrons' Council, and also of the League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses, Miss Stewart has full scope for her generous desire to further the great principles of professional organization for nurses, for which she helped to found the R.B.N.A., and which its present clique of managers have repudiated.

Sir James Crichton Browne once demonstrated, in the vernacular of the Lowlands, that he and his medical colleagues intended to be "vurry furrum" in dealing with the "turbulent minority" in the R.B.N.A. We opine that it will overtax his "furrumness" to hitch self-respecting nurses on to the apostate car of which he holds the reins.

### Legal Matters.

ANOTHER so-called nurse co-respondent! In the case of *Pope v. Pope*, where the injured wife sought a divorce because of her husband's cruelty and adultery, she said, in evidence, that, in 1896, respondent had made a statement to her about a woman named Dovey, who, he said, was trying to blackmail him. He told her that he had been intimate with Miss Dovey before he married her (petitioner). He said he met Miss Dovey at Birmingham, where she was a nurse at the County Asylum. In January or February of last year, she found a receipt in her husband's possession, signed by Miss Dovey, who had received a sum of money from him. What is to prevent this asylum attendant continuing to act as such. We long-suffering nurses have no legal status, and no Register. Like others before her, Miss Dovey gets off scott free.

Miss Breay alludes to these constantly recurring cases of immorality amongst nurses in an able letter on State Registration for Nurses, which appears in another column. It is almost impossible to estimate the discredit brought upon the profession as a whole, and the resulting distrust of nurses *as a class*, which these constant exposures in the Divorce Court produce in the public mind—and is it surprising? The intimacy between patient and nurse is inevitably so close that wives and mothers are learning to dread the advent of the so-called trained nurse into the sacred circle of the home when their menfolk are ill. How unjust these suspicions are of the majority of trained and certificated nurses, we can realise; but for the public there is no standard of any value of training or morality for nurses. They suffer from a monstrous army of quacks, and they naturally resent it.

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