

### Nursing Politics.

#### "SEIZED UPON WITH AVIDITY."

IN a contemporary, in a report of the recent Annual Meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association, the following paragraph appears:—

"Dr. Bezly Thorne moved a vote of thanks to the Hon. Secretary and other officers, and Miss Katherine Scott seconded. In the course of his remarks, the former alluded to the part taken by Lord Sandhurst in the formation of the Army Nursing Reserve, the idea of which some placed to the credit of himself, and others to Her Royal Highness the Princess Christian. Lord Sandhurst, at that time Under Secretary for War, had given it a great impetus in urging him (Dr. Bezly Thorne) to bring it before the notice of the Princess."

This statement is quite untrue in substance and fact. Neither Lord Sandhurst nor Dr. Thorne conceived the "idea" of a Reserve of Nurses, nor did Dr. Thorne bring it to the notice of the Princess.

In the year 1889, I sent a carefully drafted scheme for a Corps of Volunteer Nurses to the then Director-General of the Army Medical Department at the War Office, which was politely acknowledged, and, no doubt, at once pigeon-holed.

In 1892 I suggested the formation of a Corps of Volunteer Nurses to work in times of epidemics—in special relation to the cholera scare, and communicated my suggested scheme to the then Medical Hon. Secretary of the Royal British Nurses' Association, Dr. Bezly Thorne. In a letter from him, dated Hotel Victoria, Homburg, v. d. H., August 31st, 1892, he replied:—

"The moment I received your first letter yesterday (by second post) I took measures for communicating its contents to 'our' Princess, and she appointed 2.30 in the afternoon for talking the matter over with me. The idea which you have crystallised had been in the mind of the Princess and myself for the last few days, and we seized upon it with avidity."

Any comment upon this most characteristic statement would be superfluous.

Early in the year 1894, the Executive Committee of the R.B.N.A. requested me to present a scheme for the formation of Sub-Committees and their work, the original draft of which is in my possession, and from which I quote as follows:—

"In accordance with the request of the Committee, I beg to suggest the adoption of the

following principles, in the conduct of the business, and of the following new schemes:—

1. That the Executive Committee should divide its members to form standing Sub-Committees, to be appointed at the October meeting of each year, to meet on definite dates, and to which the work of separate departments should be delegated, each reporting to the monthly meeting of the Executive Committee.

2. That the following should be the standing Sub-Committees:—

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|-----------------------------------|---|
| (1) The Registration Board.       |   |
| (2) Benevolent Schemes Committee. |   |
| (3) Educational and Disciplinary  | „ |
| (4) The Army Reserve              | „ |
| (5) Entertainments                | „ |
| (6) Journal and Library           | „ |
| (7) Finance                       | „ |

I added:—"I have reason to think that it would be well for the Association to formulate and carry out its schemes for the Army Nursing Reserve and for the Educational Lectures as soon as possible."

In my capacity as Editor of the NURSING RECORD, I inserted, in our issue of March 24th, 1894, a report of a meeting held in London to consider the advisability of organizing a Women's Volunteer Corps, which was addressed by Surg. Lieut.-Col. Evatt, A.M.S.

I wrote as follows:—

"We may here remark that, some six years ago, we prepared, by a special request (from the late Sir William McKinnon), a scheme (which, we imagine, has been pigeon-holed from that day to this in an important Government office) for a Volunteer Corps of Nurses, to be ready to act as a Nursing Reserve in times of war or pestilence. But, of course, the essential basis of our scheme was that the Corps should be composed of thoroughly trained nurses."

These remarks brought me a kind letter from Lieut.-Col. Evatt, A.M.S., stating that for many years he had been interested in the organization of such a Reserve Corps of Nurses, and placing at my disposal an excellent article on "The Organization of the Army Medical Service in War Time," which appeared in this paper on April 7th, 1894.

With his consent, I brought his letter to the notice of Princess Christian, as President of the Royal British Nurses' Association, and dated April 1st, 1894, Royal Crescent Hotel, Brighton, I received a letter from the Medical Hon.

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