

It was decided that the Association could not initiate such a scheme, but eventually some of the medical and nursing members formed a Committee, at Mrs. Fenwick's request, and inaugurated the Registered Nurses' Society, of which she has acted as Hon. Superintendent since its inception.

Through the organization of this Society nurse members of the Royal British Nurses' Association were provided with a medium through which they could obtain private nursing work. But after the new Bye-laws were thrust upon the Association many of the early members felt compelled to resign their membership, and the Registered Nurses' Society adopted a standard of its own, and continued its work for nurses and the public entirely apart from the Royal British Nurses' Association.

The lines upon which the Society has worked are as follows:—

- (1) It demands a three years' certificate of general training from all applicants for membership.
- (2) It requires, in addition, adequate training in specialities, such as maternity nursing, midwifery, mental nursing, massage, fever nursing, etc., of members undertaking nursing in these special branches.
- (3) It inculcates and encourages in the members a sense of their direct responsibility for the well-being of the Society, and of the duty which they owe to the public in maintaining an efficient standard of nursing education for private nurses.

Maintaining as it does a standard of education and government somewhat in advance of its age, and being in no way dependent upon social patronage, the Registered Nurses' Society must necessarily grow slowly and surely in public favour, as it is doing.

The Society is not satisfied that nurses should become members merely to obtain the commercial benefits which it confers upon them, but its object has been also an educational one.

A large proportion of the Committee, therefore, consists of the members themselves, who participate in the business management of their Society, and are encouraged to take a personal interest in the conduct of their own affairs.

The Society has further cultivated a broad outlook by affiliating with the National Council of Women, and also by sending Delegates to various Congresses and meetings at which questions affecting the interest of the Nursing Profession are discussed.

I believe I am right in saying it is the only Society of Private Nurses in Great Britain which has, at its own expense, selected and sent a Delegate to this great Congress, and I consider this a

typical instance of the good which must result from encouraging nurses to take an interest in their own affairs.

I must further mention that members of the Registered Nurses' Society are encouraged to keep themselves acquainted with the contemporaneous history of their profession at large to which I ascribe the fact that many of the members of the Society are keenly interested in Nursing Politics and appreciative of progressive movements.

It has been well said that "we may divide society into those who are assisting the progress of civilization, those who are driving it backward towards barbarism, and those who, being inert and stationary, are an impediment to the efforts of others. We must choose to which of these classes we will belong, for to one or other it is evident we must belong. If we are vicious, or even ignorant and prejudiced, so that in our intercourse with society we foster old errors, and resist the improvements of the age, we must rank with those who are either impeding the prosperity of the country or forcing it back to barbarism. But if we think, speak, and act up to the moral lights of our time, assisting more or less to maintain or forward improvement, we have then a right to rank with the benefactors of mankind. Our positive influence may be greater or less, without either merit or fault of our own, but we have joined the right cause. Each soldier has a share in the honour of the victory."

I claim that in linking our fortunes with those of the leaders of our profession who are working for professional advancement, for a definite and efficient standard of nursing education, for self-government and discipline, the Registered Nurses' Society has "joined the right cause." We have proved also that it is possible to combine a high standard of professional responsibility with commercial success, and last, but not least, that if nurses are permitted a share in the management of their own affairs, they appreciate the dignity and responsibility of this trust, and perform their part conscientiously and with ability.

THE LEAGUE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S HOSPITAL NURSES.

The following paper was then read by Miss Emilie Waind, Delegate of the Society:

Madam, President, Ladies,—It will, I think, be of interest to you to know that our League of St. Bartholomew's Nurses is connected with one of the oldest hospitals in England, founded as it was in the year 1123 by a monk named Rahere, whose tomb may be seen in the beautiful church of St. Bartholomew's the Great,

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