

certificate as to health. With these, a three months' trial, and the aid of sensible and straightforward Sisters, a matron of ordinary common sense should be able to choose probationers suitable for training.

All of us would prefer to think our forbears commanded rather than served; but most of us know very little about them—often less than we pretend; and I think we can safely leave our intending probationer's ancestors in peace if she be a quiet, refined, well-educated, and kind woman.

M. MOLLETT.

The Resignation of Mr. Fardon.

The announcement of the resignation of Mr. E. A. Fardon of the office of Medical Honorary Secretary to the Royal British Nurses' Association necessitates a brief review of the most salient points in connection with his administration. The full history of these years has yet to be made public. We will, therefore, at present confine ourselves to the discussion of Mr. Fardon's policy, and the most conspicuous actions in connection with the honourable position assigned to him.

Mr. E. A. Fardon, Resident Medical Superintendent of the Middlesex Hospital, undertook the duties of the office he has just resigned in 1895. He received a warm welcome in the pages of this journal, and we well remember his calling upon us at the time to invite our support, when we assured him that it would be accorded to him so long as he maintained the principles for which the British Nurses' Association was founded. It will be useful to recapitulate these principles, so that we may estimate subsequently Mr. Fardon's discharge of his trust. They were:—

1. To unite all qualified British nurses in membership of a recognised profession.
2. To provide for their registration.
3. To associate them for their mutual help and protection and for the advancement in every way of their professional work.

We have no hesitation in saying that throughout Mr. Fardon's tenure of office he has violated these foundation principles. Instead of helping to unite British nurses for the advancement of their professional work, it was largely through him, as the official organ of the R.B.N.A. this month shows, that British nurses were deprived of that fundamental basis of all advance, the right of self-government; for to him the Association "mainly owes" the passage of those by-laws by which the members of the R.B.N.A. were deprived of rights which they formerly possessed. We enumerate this point first, for we hold it to be Mr. Fardon's deepest offence against British nurses. When he struck at their right of self-government he endeavoured to stifle the conscience which had made the Association a force in the past. To-day it is a galvanised

corpse, which out of a nominal membership of over 3,000 cannot show in its balance-sheet more than 1,200 subscribing members, and, to quote the *British Medical Journal*, the affairs of the R.B.N.A. are "largely in the hands of the medical members; the Medical Secretary presents the report, most of the speeches are made by the same members . . . the nurses are practically silent."

RATIFYING ON REGISTRATION.

Early in 1896 a conference was convened by the Parliamentary Bills Committee of the British Medical Association, at which representatives of nursing bodies were invited to be present to consider the question of State Registration for Nurses. How did Mr. Fardon, the official of an Association pledged to the principle of registration—an Association which had taken thousands of pounds from nurses for the furtherance of this principle—discharge his obligations to its members on that occasion? It is notorious that he voted for a resolution:—

"That a legal system of Registration of Nurses is *inexpedient in principle*, and injurious to the best interests of nurses and of doubtful public benefit."

Thus, one of his first public acts after accepting office in the Nurses' Association was to vote against the principle for which that Association was founded, and to which it was pledged. That he was, no doubt, the cat's-paw of the Apostle of Anti-Registration in no way excuses this impudent betrayal of the nurses' professional interests.

COERCION AND INTIMIDATION OF NURSE-MEMBERS.

How did he discharge his obligation to endeavour to unite British nurses for their mutual help and protection? One instance will suffice, though many could be quoted. In June, 1895, a nurse-member of the Association complained, in a letter addressed to the *Nursing Record*, that she had been denied a voting paper to which she was entitled. On the following day she received a threatening letter from that alarming firm of solicitors, Messrs. Lewis and Lewis, and eventually, on the threat being made to remove her name from the register—a threat which, if carried out, would have meant professional ruin to her—the nurse, Miss Barlow, applied to the Court of Justice for protection, which she obtained.

To the autocratic medical officials of the Association, it appeared intolerable that a nurse should thus successfully defend her professional good name, and, sheltering themselves behind their Royal President, they convened a meeting for the purpose of moving a resolution condemning her, notwithstanding the fact that she had been exonerated by a British court of law. As Medical Hon. Secretary the conduct of business of this meeting devolved upon Mr. Fardon. It is significant of his methods of management that, although the Chairman of the meeting, Sir James Crichton

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