

I have mentioned only two instances where injustice was done to Irish nurses through our own culpability, through lack of co-operation and unity in our profession.

I will mention some instances where great benefit to Irish nurses has already accrued through the co-operation of the members of the Irish Nurses' Association. Last year, after much discussion as to the expense and inconvenience massage pupils had in going to London to get their certificate, our Association decided to arrange for an examination in massage to be held in Dublin by the Incorporated Society of Masseuses. All this has been arranged, and next week examiners are coming from London to examine thirty-seven candidates, and these thirty-seven candidates are saved the expense, fatigue, and inconvenience of the long journey to London. The examiners are coming to them!!

Again, in securing evidence to give to the Select Committee appointed by the House of Commons to report on the expediency of providing for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, and in giving information to the Irish Members of Parliament regarding the Bills.

On April 15th, 1904, a meeting was convened by the I.N.A. Upwards of fifty medical men and 400 Matrons and nurses were present. The following resolution, proposed by Sir John W. Moore, and seconded by Dr. O'Carroll, was enthusiastically carried with two dissentients:—

"That this meeting considers that it is essential that nurses throughout the United Kingdom should be efficiently educated for the performance of the responsible duties entrusted to them. That a minimum standard of education and common rules of discipline can be secured only by an Act of Parliament; and that, as a preliminary to such legislation, it is desirable that a Select Committee of the House of Commons should be appointed at an early date to inquire into the whole nursing question."

And, again, when the scheme for the higher education and training of nurses was started by a clique of London financiers the I.N.A. applied for help to the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons asking them to protest to the Board of Trade against granting these gentlemen a license. Both Colleges gave us their support, and the College of Surgeons sent one of its Vice-presidents to give evidence at the meeting of the Board of Trade; and there is no doubt that our united action greatly helped to frustrate this scheme, and here I should like to acknowledge also our indebtedness to Lady Helen Munro-Ferguson for the timely help she gave our cause. I have not entered into details of the work involved, but these instances alone show how wise, helpful, and necessary it is that we should band ourselves together to watch and guard our interests. You are all probably aware that the Association sent a protest to the guardians of the North Dublin Union quite recently regarding a nursing scheme they propose to adopt.

I can also give an instance to show you how necessary it is that we should make ourselves known as members of an honourable and organised profession by reminding you that in the last returns

made by the Registrar-General we find he did not mention us as a separate body of women workers, but classed us with scrubbers and scullery maids, as female workers in hospitals, and because of this grouping the Registrar-General cannot tell you how many trained nurses are working in Ireland to-day. The inconvenience of this was especially noticeable some time ago. When the Society for Promoting the State Registration of Trained Nurses wanted to find out the number of nurses in Ireland for Parliamentary purposes, they naturally turned to the report of the last Census, only to find us grouped as mentioned above. They had nobody else to whom they could apply for information, so they supposed there were about 2,000 Irish nurses, while they were able to ascertain Scotland had 5,000. When we were consulted we thought we ought to have about the same number as Scotland, but, of course, it was only guess work, and when the next Census is taken we hope to be more accurately defined.

To speak of the social side of our co-operation in the year 1904, we had the pleasure of entertaining Mrs. Bedford Fenwick in Dublin and the edification of listening to addresses given by her. Miss Peter, till recently the General Superintendent of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Nurses, spent an evening with us, and next week we expect to have the pleasure of an address from Miss Amy Hughes, the present General Superintendent, in this way our young members get better to know these influential women, and, on the other hand, these ladies get a truer idea of our nurses.

At the International Congress of Women Workers held in Berlin in 1904 our delegates were most hospitably entertained and were given every opportunity of seeing the hospitals and nursing arrangements of that splendid city.

Speaking more particularly of the work and effect of the I.N.A., we have to thank the doctors for most generously giving us lectures each month on some interesting subject, and in order to try and widen our interests we ask ladies interested in public works and politics to address us, and on every occasion they have most generously acceded to our request, the members themselves have written and read papers which were followed by discussion; we also have musical evenings and a lending library. During the summer months cycle rides are arranged and on most of these occasions we enjoy the kind hospitality of members or friends who live some distance from the City; this friendly intercourse is most beneficial in broadening the views and strengthening the respect we hold for each other.

May I venture on a few words of advice: If you want to make the Ulster branch a strong and influential body, you must each of you individually work for the Society and use your influence to get other nurses to join without delay, urge them not to wait to join until they see the Society is an assured success, but to join at once and do their share towards making it one.

It is quite certain legislation of some sort will take place before long. Different Bills have been drafted and introduced into Parliament, but I am not asking you to support or disapprove of any particular Bill, and I am not asking you to agree to all that takes

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)