

THE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.

Miss Maud Banfield, in opening the meeting, said that the question under discussion was not a small matter concerning only those present, perhaps it affected them least of all; but it concerned the future of nursing, and of Bart's probationers. It was a great grief to Bart's nurses to think that the work of the 23 years of her life which their late Matron had given to the advancement of its School seemed for a moment discounted by the election as her successor of a lady who had taken a stand in opposition to the late Miss Stewart. The appointment set the hands of the clock back to reaction, in the hospital whose Matron had taken a foremost place in promoting not only the advancement of nursing, but of women's work generally. It might frankly be admitted that the question of registration of nurses had very possibly something to do with this matter, and it must be understood that registration concerned the public even more than the nurses. When nurses asked for registration they were not moved by self-interested motives, but were asking for the protection of the public. Was any hospital which did not protect the public the friend of the public?

Miss Banfield spoke of the reputation of Bart's nurses abroad, and specially of two who had worked as she had done in Philadelphia, whose reputation, though they were foreigners in a foreign country, had spread all over the United States.

She referred also to the late Miss Catherine Loch, who organised, and was first Superintendent, of the Indian Army Nursing Service, and to the work of Bart's nurses in the Navy and Military Nursing Services. It was quite impossible to suppose that there had been a sudden slump, and that no one of them could be found capable of assuming the position of Matron and Superintendent of Nursing—if the old traditions were to be carried on. "Ladies and gentlemen," said the Chairman, "what is the matter, don't they want a high standard, don't they want high ideals? The cynics say that ideals are uncomfortable things, but a person without ideals is dull, and a nation without ideals is wicked."

RESOLUTION I.

The Chairman then called on Miss E. B. Kingsford (cert. St. Bartholomew's Hospital) to move the first resolution, as follows:—

This Meeting of Trained Nurses and others interested in the efficient care of the sick, desires to express the widespread regret which is felt that the Election Committee of St. Bartholomew's Hospital have selected a lady from the London Hospital, where a two years' certificate of training

is awarded, to be Matron and Superintendent of Nursing of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and is strongly convinced that the decision will cause the gravest injury to the prestige of its time-honoured Three Years' Certificate of Nursing, and imperil the efficiency and success of the Nursing School of St. Bartholomew's Hospital.

This Meeting is of opinion that by their action the Election Committee of St. Bartholomew's Hospital have (1) publicly expressed their want of appreciation of the arduous and self-sacrificing work done for the Hospital and the public for the past 23 years by the late revered Matron; (2) their conviction that not one of the nurses trained under her direction is worthy of selection to succeed her in office, and (3) that thereby they are condemning both the efficiency of the educative work of their medical and nursing staffs, and also the methods adopted by the Governors themselves for the management of a great public and historic institution.

In view of the action taken by the Election Committee this meeting considers that a Public Inquiry should be immediately made into the methods of management of the Nursing School of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, by the whole body of Governors.

This meeting, furthermore, is strongly of opinion that the said Public Inquiry should also investigate the condition of the Nurses' Home of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, which has for years been condemned as insufficient for the accommodation of the Nursing Staff, as insanitary, and as a death-trap in case of fire for the nurses who occupy the antiquated houses which compose the Home.

THE PROTEST.

Miss Kingsford said that it was with very mixed feelings that she rose to move this resolution. She was proud that her voice should be the one selected to be raised in protest, and she was filled with indignation that such a vindication of their late Matron, and the work she did, should be necessary. Miss Stewart was straight, loyal, high principled. She inculcated these virtues into every nurse trained under her, and she always had at heart the good of the whole nursing profession. It was with a feeling of burning indignation that her pupils learnt, while letters of respect for her, and admiration for her work, were still being received from all parts of the world, that that work was put aside, by the very people for whom it had been so loyally performed.

Beyond this Miss Kingsford drew attention to the depreciation of the value of the Bart's certificate by the action of the Committee, that certificate for which those who held it had toiled for three years in the wards, at the cost of personal discomfort in the antiquated Home, in order that they might win the certificate they coveted. Now that the value of that certificate had been so depreciated was it not time that Bart's nurses were adequately housed?

The Chairman called on Mrs. Stabb to second the resolution.

Mrs. Stabb (cert., St. Bartholomew's Hospital)

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