

## THE COLLEGE OF NURSING, LTD., AND IRISH NURSES.

The Honble. Albinia Brodrick, a highly trained nurse and social reform worker, whose devoted labours on behalf of her beloved country—Ireland, are so well known and appreciated, last week contributed the following professional expression of opinion on the College of Nursing scheme in the *Weekly Irish Times*.

### SELF GOVERNMENT FOR IRISH NURSES DEMANDED.

SIR,—You are, I observe, opening your columns for the discussion of the so-called College of Nursing, its possible benefits to the trained nurse, its scope, its aims. It is, I believe, the first time in history that amateurs have set out to organize a body of highly skilled workers, belonging to a profession requiring advanced technical proficiency and scientific knowledge, on what appear to themselves serious lines. The old guilds of the craftsmen of the Middle Ages in all countries were officered and managed by their own members. In our own day the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons, the Apothecaries, Musicians, Labour Organizations, Oddfellows, are manned and governed not from the outside, but from the inside of their respective professions, societies, and trades. This, on the face of it, looks like common-sense. Yet, in this twentieth century, we of the Nursing profession, on the skilful practice of which the health, the lives, and the dearest hopes of the nation and the race depend, are called upon to sacrifice our liberty, the dignity of our profession, and the welfare of humanity to the whim of amateurs, of a few reactionary members, well known to us all, of our own profession, and of some of the sister profession.

What are we Nurses to gain by this unholy combination? A Nurses' Registration Bill? We have already our own Registration Bill, the outcome of our own professional efforts, and need no other. Our Bill is no retrograde or reactionary one. Unlike the one suggested by the "Council" of the proposed Nursing College, it issues from Nurses, is supported by the forward party in the Nursing world, and provides for government of ourselves by ourselves. The National Council of Nurses and the National Union of Nurses in England, the Scottish Nurses' Association, the Irish Nurses' Association, have all repeatedly affirmed their belief in this carefully thought out measure, supported by the Medical Profession both in England and in Ireland.

But the "College" promises—its promises are many, and not always easy to see through—benefits apart from registration. To collect them briefly they are:—

1. A Patron. Do we Nurses want patronage?
2. A Council partly elected by Nurses. Not for two years, however, until the bye-laws are irrevocably fixed, and with the distinct understanding that the Governing Body may have *anyone* elected on to it, no matter whom or what they may be.
3. Persons and bodies "interested" in the question of Nursing are eligible for the Governing Body and the Consultative Board. But these are the very people we Nurses do not desire to see on them. We all have experience of such persons, and of their colossal ignorance, and we do not propose to give them the opportunity of governing us.

Can any of us be so dense as to pay the sum of one guinea, on the strength of such promises and the advantage of a second-hand Registration Bill? It is true that we have long been a down-trodden Profession. But just

as the day is dawning for us after twenty-five years of hard work in the fight for Registration, is it likely that we shall lay aside the substance for this shadow? Naturally the "College" wants our guineas. Without them it cannot properly subjugate us.

Consider the history of this "College." There has been muddling, as we Nurses know well, in the War Nursing. Some of those partly responsible for this muddle fancy themselves as the Heaven-sent organisers of the future of Nursing—step one. Step two—Having been unaware of the fact previously, it was borne in upon them later that there was a matter called Registration, and that Nurses meant to have Registration, adoption of Registration. Step three—Further surprise, on finding that Nurses had already societies and aims of their own, and half-hearted, but very unbusiness-like consultations with representatives of these societies. Step four—Left in the lurch by these societies, who stood firmly by the principle of the Nursing profession, like other professions, being a self-governing one. Step five—End of the College of Nursing Limited, and amalgamation with what remains of the Royal British Nurses' Association, the latter losing thereby their hard-won charter. Step six (so far as Ireland is concerned)—An attempt to rush Irish Nurses into the fancy scheme for their destruction as a responsible self-governing body, by sending over two ladies, who, after dealing out probabilities and promises most generously, held up before us the bogey of being left out of the fancy scheme. And who would suffer if we were? Why, the College, that would not get our guineas.

Poor College. It would be profoundly laughable, were it not so grievous, to find at this time, when America, Australia, and New Zealand are forging ahead on splendid lines of Self-Government in the Nursing Profession, a body of English people going back to the feudal principle, now as extinct as the Dodo, and actually holding it out to us on this side of the water as a joy and a delight. What do they take us for? V.A.D.?

ALBINIA BRODRICK.

## CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR DISTRICT NURSING IN LONDON.

The Annual Meeting of the Central Council for District Nursing in London was held, by permission of the Chairman of the Metropolitan Asylums Board, in the Board Room at its Offices, on Friday, February 16th. Sir William Collins presided.

The adoption of the Report of the Executive Committee was moved by Sir Arthur Downes, the Chairman. The Report stated that Mr. Briant had been appointed Vice-Chairman, and Miss Hughes and Miss Puxley Hon. Secretaries of the Committee. The heaviest work fell upon the Organization Sub-Committee, of which Mr. Briant was elected Chairman.

Of changes in the personnel of the Council, Dr. Ethel Bentham and Miss Marsters have been elected members since the last Annual Meeting, the former nominated by the Panel Committee for the County of London, *vice* Dr. Hudson, the latter by the National Union of Trained Nurses, *vice* Miss Joseph.

The Draft Annual Report for the year 1916 was then submitted to the Council with the

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