

## MEMORANDUM ON THE COLLEGE OF NURSING.

BY THE CHAIRMAN AND MATRON OF THE LONDON HOSPITAL.

Lord Knutsford, Chairman of the London Hospital, and Miss Eva C. E. Lückes, the Matron, have each contributed a solo on the subject of the College of Nursing. Now we have a duet, issued by them from the London Hospital, which opens thus

### ENTIRE DIFFERENCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES WHICH THE COLLEGE ADVOCATES.

"In answer to many inquiries we have to say that it is with sincere regret that we find ourselves in strong opposition to the College of Nursing, because of an entire difference with the principles which the College advocates. When it was first proposed to establish a College of Nursing we cherished a hope that some sort of scheme might be arrived at, on lines that would advance the best interests of Nurses and Nursing. But that hope was short-lived, for almost immediately after its formation, the College put in the forefront of its programme the very objects which we and so many others have opposed successfully for many years."

The first thing that strikes the reader of this "Memorandum" is the isolation of the writers, and the defection of the "so many others" to whom they refer. The manifestoes from the London Hospital have been wont to be issued with a chorus of signatories—Matrons and others from the majority of the London Hospitals with medical schools attached, and certain provincial hospitals, who have repeatedly affirmed their belief that 'any system of State Registration would be detrimental to the public and harmful to the nurses themselves,' and it is, of course, State Registration of Nurses which the officials of the London Hospital have opposed for so many years. Now, however, not only have their supporters from other hospitals deserted them, but their own pupils have fallen from grace, witness the fact that the Matrons of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and the Royal Infirmary, Bristol, are members of the Council of the College of Nursing, Ltd., and other "Londoners" have declared their adhesion, and are actively working to promote its objects.

### CHORUS.

We are ourselves constrained to play the part of chorus to the following paragraph of the Memorandum

"It seems a pity to bring forward controversial questions of long standing at a time when all Hospitals, Training Schools, and Nurses are working under exceptionally high pressure in consequence of the War, and when few have time, or ought not to have time, to consider new organisations."

We are in entire agreement with this view, and are of opinion that it is incompatible with the discharge of their professional duties for Matrons from the provinces to attend fortnightly meetings of the Council of the College, and that they are in a very invidious position if they are merely figure-heads, allowing the Council to act in their name.

The writers assert that "Although the Training Schools go on doing their best to keep up the number of newly Certificated Nurses produced annually the probabilities are that for many years to come, there will not be sufficient Trained Nurses to meet the various needs for them after the War is over.

"In such abnormal conditions," they say, "we find it difficult to understand that it should be deemed necessary, or even desirable, to select the present moment to legislate for the supposed welfare of Trained Nurses and to settle on what lines the education of future Nurses should proceed in normal times. No one can foresee with any certainty how Nursing matters will shape themselves after the war. The advocates of the College think it desirable to press forward their views before the return of the many Nurses who are now serving their Country in various parts of the world."

### CHIEF OBJECTS OF THE COLLEGE.

The writers then discuss "the chief objects which the College desires to bring about, and for which it hopes to get a Bill through Parliament" under the following heads—

1st. *The State Registration of Trained Nurses.* To this we have the time-worn objections once again expounded. "It has the insuperable objection of placing Nurses who are good on the same level with those who are indifferent or bad. Nurses with inferior qualifications would feel they had something to gain if they could be stamped with the same Hall-mark as Nurses whose training and personal qualifications are beyond question—the best Nurses have a great deal to lose by having their names placed on a Register with a multitude of others whose claims when they are judged on their own merits are admittedly inferior." Then there is the fallacy that the arguments which apply to the Medical Profession, Dentists and Midwives are not applicable to Nurses.

All four professions stand on exactly the same basis, and in each high moral character and professional skill are required.

The writers appeared to regard the use of the Register to be to afford a list of nurses suitable for private nursing.

All these arguments have been laid before the House of Lords, and before a Select Committee of the House of Commons. In neither instance did they influence the judgment finally expressed, any more than the alternative proposition—that an Official Directory of Nurses should be substituted for a Register—commended itself to the House of Lords when a Bill with that object was brought in by Lord Balfour of Burleigh in 1908. That

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