

The President said that this beautiful and inspiring message was a bolt from the blue, but it was none the less welcome. She did not think that anyone who had not taken part in the nursing controversy of the last year in this country could understand what it meant to the women at the wheel, who were facing a storm of prejudice, and who were persistently misrepresented by a reptile press.

Happily nurses had their own professional organ, their tongues, and the sympathy of persons able to help them, and we had now in our midst the Units of American nurses, the practical results of what could be accomplished by nurses with a free hand to help themselves.

In the last fortnight we had welcomed Unit after Unit of trained nurses from America, where in forty-five States registration laws were in force, the organisation under those laws being mainly in the hands of the registered nurses themselves. These Units were composed of standardised, registered women, in some cases university graduates also. When we looked at home what a terrible difference was apparent.

THE CRISIS.

The present crisis in the nursing profession was all to the good. It had brought out in those who possessed it the grand British quality of tenacity of purpose. Our men at the front had proved themselves possessed of this quality to a splendid degree, and we nurses must emulate them. We bitterly resented having to push propaganda during the war, we longed to give every minute of time to the care of the sick and wounded, and to working for our country. But controversy had been thrust upon us; it was testing our mettle.

There was systematic determination in the Bill drafted by the College of Nursing, to deny direct representation on the Provisional Council to make the Rules, to the members of the Nurses' Organisations, which had promoted and paid for the State Registration Movement, and thus thrust upon the profession a constitution concerning which they had not been consulted. It was a simple proposition. Unless provision was made in the Bill for the direct representation of the nurses on the Provisional Council all the "registered nurses" would have to do in the future would be to obey laws which they had had no part in making. It was professional taxation without representation. We demanded professional enfranchisement, and no Bill promoted by the College or any other body should become law without a determined struggle which did not provide for this fundamental principle. We had thrown down the gauntlet to the College of Nursing, and unless it dealt justly with us we intended to fight it to the last ditch. Mrs. Fenwick said in conclusion that to accept office on the Council of the College of Nursing, under its present constitution, would be in her opinion, to betray the interests and liberties of the whole Nursing Profession.

We must bring our case before Members of Parliament and claim and if necessary fight for

professional enfranchisement. Public feeling was in sympathy with our just claims.

The crowded meeting heartily endorsed these sentiments.

MAJOR CHAPPLE'S SPEECH.

Major Chapple, M.P., who was warmly applauded on rising, said that he shared the feelings of those who had spoken on the honour which had fallen to their President. She had worked and fought for progress for thirty years, and it was amazing that a struggle for truth and right, conducted with so much ability, should not yet have resulted in its consummation. It was wonderful how a highly educated and enlightened people could, as in the struggle for the Medical Acts, make so little progress; but a cause so fair, so just, so wise, must be presented to a just Premier.

He was one of those who liked to spot offenders. Mrs. Fenwick had worked so hard, was so much beloved and admired, that even in the opposing camp it was recognized not only that she represented a great cause, but that she brought to it unlimited capacity for service, singleness of aim, and absence of self-seeking. Mr. Arthur Stanley and Sir Charles Russell both recognized that the State Registration of Nurses was a just reform, which was bound to come, and that Mrs. Bedford Fenwick had been the guiding spirit of the movement.

If there were not great vested interests involved, State Registration would have had no opponents. Now, although former opponents were giving their adherence to the great principle, it seemed as if, by a side wind, many were trying to torpedo the movement.

Those present would like to know what the prospects were. In regard to unanimity, complete unanimity was not possible. When Mr. Asquith had once asked him, "Why do you not convert the opposition?" his reply had been, "Why don't you convert the Ulster people to Home Rule?" But, if you could not obliterate the opposition, you must overwhelm it.

What was the next step? He agreed that the Central Committee had gone as far as possible to meet the College of Nursing. It could not tolerate the setting up of a provisional Council unless the great democracy were represented upon it.

In connection with the medical profession, the legislation enacted was primarily and fundamentally in the interests of the sick; it distinguished those who were trained from those who were not. You might not claim to be a qualified doctor if your name were not on the Medical Register, but, said Major Chapple, his orderly might borrow his stethoscope or prescribe for a patient, provided he did not claim to be a registered practitioner.

In the same way, V.A.D.s could nurse. What those girls would not be able to do would be to claim that they were trained. Why should a claim so just as the registration of the trained worker be denied? It was in the interests of the nursing profession and of the sick. As you educated and trained women, you were raising them to a higher

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