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EDITORIAL.

THE PASSING OF THE R. B. N. A.

In our present issue we report the special meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association held in London on January 18th, at which the members bestowed their Royal Charter on the College of Nursing Company, for, though much was said of fusion, the fact remains that if the arrangement entered into between the Association and the College is carried into effect, British nurses will no longer possess a Professional Association organized under a Royal Charter, but may become members of the Royal British College of Nursing, an educational body, the constitution of which admits the laity to membership and official control.

In another column we publish the review of a book—"Nursing Problems and Obligations" by one of the leaders of nursing thought and progress in America—Miss Sara E. Parsons, R.N.—which vividly reminds us of the aspirations which inspired those who worked for, paid for, and won the Royal Charter after they founded the British Nurses' Association thirty years ago.

Miss Parsons reminds us that the nurse "has her definite rights as well as her definite obligations. There is much that she should respect, but nothing that she need fear, so long as she is entirely honourable in her personal and professional relations. Her soul should be full of courage and aspirations . . . above all she must remember that the work needs her own interpretation, initiative, originality, anything but slavish imitation."

That is the spirit in which the British Nurses' Association was founded, giving generous representation to all grades on its governing body, one third doctors, one third Matrons, and one third Sisters and Nurses. Under its Royal Charter the first purpose of the Corporation was "the

founding and maintenance of schemes for the benefit of Nurses in the practice of their profession," so that the Association had certainly the power to organize a College of Nursing as one of its objects. Had those Matrons who for so long opposed the principle of State Registration desired to demonstrate their conversion they could have adopted no better method than by joining the Royal British Nurses' Association and helping to carry out the purposes for which it was founded. This they have not done, instead the College of Nursing has absorbed the Nurses' Royal Charter, and, whatever may be accomplished henceforth through its agency the nurses must realize that they have lost their Chartered Organization.

It was not a wedding ceremony as some speakers stated, but the funeral obsequies of the Royal British Nurses' Association which took place on January 18th. The Medical Hon. Secretary indeed spoke quite frankly of the Royal British Nurses' Association ceasing to exist, and the Royal British College of Nursing rising from its ashes, and said that the passing of the Association was a matter of sincere regret to him.

In these circumstances it is not a hopeful sign that the Council of the College has not placed one Sister or Nurse upon the Conjoint Council.

The point of main importance is, however, the attitude adopted by the College to a Nurses' Registration Bill. Will it promote a Bill claiming the government of the nursing profession for its own close corporation, or will it help to get a Bill through Parliament setting up an independent governing body for nurses, as provided by Act of Parliament for the organization of the medical, midwifery and teaching professions? Upon the answer to that question very large issues depend.

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