

tion that the time is not far distant when the State will see the importance of recognising a definite diploma of nursing, and of giving its official sanction to the maintenance of the Register of Trained Nurses." In 1897 Mr. Fardon, the Hon. Sec., and the Nurse Delegate of the Executive Committee, voted, at an important public Conference with the British Medical Association, in support of the following resolution:—"That a legal system of registration of nurses is inexpedient in principle, and injurious to the best interests of nurses, and of doubtful public benefit." So that the Royal British Nurses' Association has been used to oppose the principle of State Registration of Nurses, which it was formed to attain.

In 1895 I proposed the following resolution at a meeting of the Matrons' Council, and it was seconded by Miss Rogers, of Leicester:—"That the Matrons' Council approves of the principle of preliminary education for nurses in the elements of anatomy, physiology, therapeutics, antiseptics, hygiene, practical nursing, and dietetics, invalid cooking, domestic ward management, and professional etiquette, and that they request that the Royal British Nurses' Association will take into consideration the development of the scheme."

This resolution was forwarded to the Royal British Nurses' Association, and the Executive Committee of that Society declined to accede to our request, giving as an excuse the following statement made in reply to the Petitioners against the Royal Charter—"The Association disavows any desire, and the Charter will give no power to 'regulate and control the training and education of the whole body of Nurses' or to interfere in any way with the Nurse Training Schools."*

As we had asked for the inauguration of a voluntary preliminary course of training, thereby carrying out the very first clause of the Charter which says the Association was established for "the improvement of the profession of nursing," and as this did not affect the Nurse Training Schools in any way, the answer was most irrelevant, and merely the excuse, of the *non-possumus* policy of the medical members, —expressed in the now proverbial "Pooh! Pooh!" But we must decline to be airily pooh-poohed.

The only other professional Association of Nurses is the Matrons' Council—a Society—the members of which must be trained nurses holding the position of Matron or Superinten-

dent of nursing in a hospital, and whose objects are briefly as follows:—

(1) To enable Members to take counsel together upon matters affecting their profession.

(2) To bring about a uniform system of education, examination, certification, and State Registration for Nurses in British Hospitals.

(3) To form an Advisory Committee, to which Members can apply in cases of professional difficulty.

(4) To hold Conferences to discuss subjects of professional and also of general interest.

(5) To encourage Members to understand the methods of procedure at meetings.

So that, after ten years' work, owing to systematic opposition upon the part of interested persons, very little has been done to organize nurses into a united, and, therefore, a powerful professional body. That is the great work which lies before us in the future, and which, in spite of the discouragements met with in the past, will, I feel sure, inspire the more thoughtful amongst us to strenuous and renewed efforts in the future. One thing, of course, we cannot recognise as the least possible, and that is, ultimate failure. But we live in a tight little Conservative island—chock full of prejudices—and governed systematically by party politics, and we must not forget that we women are an outcast class—forming with the unhappy lunatic, the impotent pauper, the incarcerated criminal, the quartette of slave castes—in one word—we are Disfranchised.

Under all these adverse circumstances, to tackle the future will, no doubt, require heroic effort—but we have a shining example away in the West—and what American women can do, can also be accomplished by British women. Where duty calls, we must follow.

I need not emphasize the necessity that we should be firm at this juncture, how necessary it is that the true interests of our profession should be jealously guarded by us, and how all important that we should prove ourselves possessed of that fine courage which can look a reverse of fortune straight in the face, and go on working for a principle. With advocates thus inspired, a righteous cause, is absolutely certain to succeed in the end. Nothing can withstand the combination of conscience and courage. In the past, we British nurses have not commanded success, because we were not strong enough to demand it. We have not proved ourselves worthy. So much for the past. But the future shows a clean page. Let us leave our mark upon it.

(To be continued.)

* Such a preliminary programme would not have interfered with the Nurse Training Schools; it would have helped their educational curriculum.

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