

First having attacked the Matrons' Council in both Houses of Parliament in the most unprofessional and unpardonable manner, it straightway adopted three of the fundamental objects of its policy word for word!

In the year 1907 Mrs. Bedford Fenwick accepted an invitation, for the second time, to visit Scotland and address gatherings of nurses on the question of State Registration. When in Edinburgh Mrs. Fenwick called on Miss Gill at the Royal Infirmary, and suggested to her that a Scottish Matrons' Association should be formed, as in England and Ireland such Associations were working for the benefit of the Nursing Profession, with excellent results. Reports containing the Objects and Bye Laws of the Matrons' Council were handed to Miss Gill. In 1910 the Scottish Matrons' Association was inaugurated, Miss Gill becoming its President, and the objects of the Matrons' Council were adopted in several instances, the aims of the two societies having much in common. Thus when the Editor of this JOURNAL was informed by the President and Hon. Secretary of the new Association of Matrons recently formed at St. Thomas' Hospital that this JOURNAL had made "incorrect" and "inaccurate" statements in publishing the fact that it had adopted the policy and objects of the Matrons' Council as the basis of its Constitution, it appears opportune to point out to them how that Association came to do so!

The Editor of this JOURNAL, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, drafted the Constitution of the Matrons' Council in 1894. She submitted it to Miss Gill in 1907, and it was largely adopted by the Scottish Matrons' Association when founded in 1910, and according to the information placed before our readers last week by Miss Lloyd Still and Miss Cox-Davies, we now know how they came to approve of it!

To quote the communication received from these ladies in attempting to disprove our statement that they had adopted the Matrons' Council programme and objects whilst depreciating the women who formed it.

They write:—

"The inaccuracy of this statement is of little importance to us, and our only reason for requesting you to correct it is lest, by our silence, we appear ungrateful to the President of the Scottish Matrons' Association, whose kind assistance in drafting the Constitution of the Association of Hospital Matrons we have already most gratefully acknowledged." We

repeat that instead of accusing the Editor of this JOURNAL of "inaccuracy" and untruth, Miss Lloyd-Still and Miss Cox-Davies owe an ample apology not only to the members of the Matrons' Council, but to the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, who drafted the original Constitution they have adopted, presumably in ignorance, and for circulating an inaccurate statement in the press after they had the printed proof before them that the statement we made, and now repeat, was correct. Unless the Association of Hospital Matrons are content to remain an off-shoot of the pioneer Matrons' Council—which they affect to despise—they will at once summon a meeting, revise their objects, and attempt to originate a Constitution and programme of their own. Moreover, they are in honour bound to make public confession that they have done so.

The whole episode is so typical of "College" plagiarism where the creative faculty and work of others is concerned, that this honourable course may not, we fear, appeal to them.

Miss Heather-Bigg, President of the Matrons' Council, has communicated with the journals to which the officers of the Association of Hospital Matrons sent their most inaccurate letter, in which, after quoting the portion of the Matrons' Council Constitution adopted, without acknowledgment, word for word, she continues:—

"Whether the Association of Hospital Matrons adopted these objects from the constitution of the Matrons' Council directly or indirectly through the Scottish Matrons' Association founded in 1910, is of no importance.

"Our point is that having adopted, perhaps unknowingly, the objects defining the fundamental policy of the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland, they should at once have apologised, made due acknowledgment and revised the phraseology of their Constitution.

"Instead, the officials of the new Association wrote to the Press denying their indebtedness, and Miss Cox-Davies in an interview is reported to have said:—

"We do want it to be understood that this Association has not been formed in any spirit of rivalry. There is no suggestion of rivalry, and no suggestion of antagonism. On the contrary, it is because we desire a peaceable Association that we have formed this one, and we should be extremely vexed and annoyed if any controversial spirit should creep in."

"The only inference to be drawn from this innuendo is that there is no Association open to Matrons at the present time which is peaceable. I beg, therefore to state that the harmony in the Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland

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