

A GRIM IRONY.

I was asked by one of the nurses to call attention to the control of large sums of money—a great power for good and evil in the hands of employers of nurses—which the College has for pushing its autocratic policy. It will be a grim irony indeed if the Nation's Fund for Nurses—the Nation's debt of gratitude to the nurses—is to be used to forge their fetters. If this money, indirectly the fruit of many a weary vigil on the part of the nurses, is to be used to wreck their Registration Bill now before the House of Commons, or so to change its provisions as to give the nurses no security that they shall have a voice in the management of their affairs. How can you expect to get proper conditions of work or pay unless you have security that a majority of seats shall be allotted to the nurses? The College itself has convinced me of the necessity for this. Every day, in my office, nurses explain to me why they join the College: "Matron said it was the right thing to do, you cannot argue with the Matron"; "we were told it would save us an examination." Only the other day a young nurse came to the office saying "I am convinced the Societies are in the right, but Matron keeps bullying me to join the College. She says that I shall get no post worth having unless I am a member of the College. If I join the R.B.N.A., will it be against my prospects of getting a post?" I said, "I do not know, it certainly ought not to be, but it might be in certain cases. That does not matter; you have to 'choose the right' and stand to it."

In the afternoon she came back with the papers filled in, and it went to my heart when she handed them to me and said, "You really do think, do you not, that it will not hinder my getting on? It is so hard to get a decent salary, and so awful to feel that I may be a pauper when I am old." Fellow nurses, that is one of several such incidents which I could relate. No one person or group of persons has the right to control to this extent of your great profession, no right to lay hold the free will of other workers—workers in a calling which already claims such sacrifices. Such things are wrong, just as wrong as when one gains power over another's will by hypnotism. It is wrong, utterly wrong, too, that nurses in hospitals should be permitted to hear only the side of the College question, while the Societies, organised and financed by the nurses themselves in order that they may fight their battles, are not permitted a hearing at this time of the greatest crisis in the history of your profession. It is to perpetuate this condition of things that the sub-section securing seats for the nurses on their Governing Body has disappeared from the College Bill.

EATING THE CHILDREN'S BREAD.

When I referred to the position that the heads of the nursing profession have taken in this controversy, I spoke in no spirit of pure bitterness. The Matrons, those mothers of the nurses, know so little of the difficulties that lie in the path of

those nurses who, owing to conditions in the hospitals, are driven out into other branches of the profession, which, consequently, become overcrowded; particularly this refers to private nursing practice, which is more and more being absorbed for the benefit of the Schools—Schools that eat the bread of the children. If the heads of the nursing profession sat at my office desk instead of in their sheltered quarters secure in the hospitals, we should find them, not standing behind evolution, as the latest alteration in the College Bill proves that they do, but in the forefront of the movement to claim that there shall be government of the profession by the profession, for the profession. Fellow Members of the Organised Societies of Nurses, comrades who have covenanted with us, you who have so loyally supported us shoulder to shoulder in this long, hard struggle, I would remind you that there comes a time in the history of every nation, in the history of every religion, in the history of every profession when it must either go forwards or backwards, when it must choose whether it will be on the crest of the wave of evolution, or whether it will remain as driftweed high on the sands of time, a time, fellow nurses, when wrongs must be righted, when old-established abuses must be destroyed, and a great re-building must begin.

It is our misfortune, perhaps some day it may be our glory, that it is in our day this crisis has arrived for the nursing profession, and so now, in the name of your responsibilities to the sick and suffering, in the name of your responsibilities to your fellow nurses, in the name, most of all, of your responsibilities to those who will step into your places when you drop out of the ranks—the nurses of future generations—I ask you to support the Resolution, which I now move for adoption by this meeting.

MISS EDEN SECONDS THE RESOLUTION.

MISS E. L. C. EDEN, Hon. Advisor to the National Union of Trained Nurses, seconded the resolution in the following words:—

It is with the utmost conviction that I rise to second the Resolution, proposed by Miss Macdonald. That seats on the Council should be guaranteed to the profession is a matter of life and death to that profession. The Bill promoted by the College of Nursing, as now before the House of Lords, in which not a single seat on the Council is secured to nurses, far from proving a help to the profession, would simply bring into existence a powerful piece of machinery for the control of nurses—their conditions, their salaries, their careers—by the authorities of Training Schools; that is, by their employers. We are not going to allow such a weapon to be forged. That this has been the tendency of the College from the first we have known, and that is why we have held so firmly together and fought for the protection of the interests of the working nurse; and here I would like to say that I am not imputing to any individual any evil intentions. We all

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