

A FOUNDATION OF FREEDOM AND TRUTH.

On June 22, 1922, the foundation stone of the "new" College of Nursing, Ltd., in Cavendish Square, "was well and truly laid." Those who survive for another twenty years may perhaps be able to speak of the success or failure of the new College. To found an association of this sort there must be a moral as well as a physical structure to build upon, and upon the moral, more than any other, will success or failure depend. It is easier to reconstruct a building that has been made of bad material, than it is to build up an association whose moral foundation is not stable, as underpinning is only of temporary use.

I cannot help calling to mind another building whose foundation stone was, I believe, twenty odd years ago, laid with like pomp and circumstance. It was to be of great benefit to nurses. The money was partly given by "the charity" of a great lady, but the nurses were privileged to pay more than half of the expenses themselves. They were not informed, however, of the agreement drawn up at the building of this house till some considerable time later, when they found it had been arranged by certain interested parties that, although their money was to help to build and be entirely responsible for the upkeep, it was expressly stipulated that *no nurse should have any part or lot in the management*. That house has been from the beginning a most unqualified failure. It has never been able financially to support itself in twenty years; it has been a great source of discontent to the nurses concerned, and whenever money was required to get it out of financial difficulties, the nurses' money had to be used.

With this in mind, one wonders what agreement has been made at the foundation of the new College of Nursing. As far as I can gather, members have not been informed on this matter, but no college or society can prosper that has not a foundation of *freedom and truth*. I give an example of what I mean from the Seventh Annual Report of the College of Nursing, Ltd. It refers to the Unemployment Insurance Act:—

"FREEDOM!

"As early as November, 1920, a referendum of 19,800 members was taken to ascertain their wishes in the matter. The number of returns sent in response was most disappointing, as *less than 5,000 replies were received*, and thus the Council, not having substantial support from members, was unable to approach the Ministry of Labour with any hope of success. In November last, however, the Council had reason to believe that another referendum would be more fruitful of results. Accordingly, forms for signature by nurses wishing exemption were sent to *all institutions and authorities where nurses were employed*, and this appeal resulted in 35,500 such signatures."

To quote again from this report:—

"TRUTH!

"Following upon this response, a deputation, introduced by Mr. Leonard Lyle, M.P., was received by the Minister of Labour: Later, a conference with other nurses' societies was called, and consideration was given to special schemes, &c., but it was when the Unemployment Insurance Bill was before the House of Commons for amendment that the members of the College rose to the occasion and enthusiastically supported Mr. Lyle when, on the second reading of the Bill in the House of Commons, *he stated in the widest terms the nurses' case for exemption*."

I also give a portion of a letter sent to a paper concerning this matter by Major Barnett, M.P., who had worked very hard in the nurses' interests before ever Mr. Lyle took them up. It was addressed from the House of Commons:—

"You describe the proposed new clause, which stood in the names of Captain Elliot, Mr. Hopkins and myself, as 'a counter-amendment' to that of Mr. Lyle. As a matter of fact, our clause to exempt registered nurses and nurse probationers from unemployment insurance was handed in at the Table early on *Thursday, March 30th*, and officially printed on the following day, while it was only on the *Saturday* that Mr. Lyle's new clause (subsequently withdrawn), appeared for the first time on the paper."

Can any permanent building—physical or spiritual—be raised on material abstracted from its neighbours? Those who are alive twenty years hence may be able to judge in this particular matter, but it is as true to-day as when the words were written:

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."

MAUDE MACCALLUM,
Registered Nurse.

BETHLEM ROYAL HOSPITAL.

The Physician Superintendent of Bethlem Royal Hospital (Dr. J. G. Porter Phillips) has reported to the Governors that 511 patients—212 being men and 299 women—were under treatment there last year. Of these 188 were voluntary boarders. There were discharged as having recovered 132, as being relieved 25; 20 patients died. The patients admitted during the year included many professional men, officers of H.M. Forces, and Civil servants. In the hospital for nervous diseases 651 outpatients made 3,088 attendances.

The average cost of maintenance per head per week last year was £6 4s. Fifty-three per cent. of the patients were received gratuitously, and 47 per cent paid at reduced rates varying from 21s. to 63s. 6d. per week. The Commissioners of the Board of Control state that the hospital continues to be carried on in a very efficient manner under Dr. Porter Phillips, and all who are under treatment are receiving proper care and attention.

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