

## HOW THE COLLEGE CAUCUS CAPTURED THE COUNCIL (G.N.C.).

### PITHECANTHROPUS ERECTUS.

If you wish to touch bed-rock, and realise "How the College Caucus Captured the Council," you must revert to prehistoric times, study anthropology, swing through the branches of primeval forests with the anthropoid, concentrate for quite a while on the habits of the *Pithecanthropus erectus* (the erect ape-man), call in on the hirsute cave man (keep clear of his club), and there you are—at least there you will be if you escape from their primitive instincts.

It is quite a simple proposition—Submission or death!

Resist the anthropoid and he used tusk and claw, seized your jugular, let loose your life's blood in ruddy flow, and sent forth his vibrant yell of triumph. *Pithecanthropus erectus* no doubt would land you a knock-out blow below the belt, and the cave man cracked your cranium with accuracy, and grunts of gratification.

What is half a million years in the eons of time? Nothing where the sub-conscious animal instinct is concerned.

Clothed man may appear less terrific than his progenitors—but touch his dominating sex pride, his vanity, or his lust for power, and you will find him as elemental as any anthropoid. It is with these primal instincts with which you come into collision, if you also are instinct with personality, and require space for expansion of body, soul, and spirit. Self-expression. Judgment.

The modern man still employs instinctive methods in public life where women are concerned. He has no desire to share equally with us in government. Indeed, he claims to put "his foot down" every time. And where the vocation of Nursing is concerned he has retarded its higher development on ethical lines from first to last, and apparently reduced its *personnel* to pulp. Therefore, if you want to know how the College has captured the Council, you must first grasp a few fundamental truths of the natural law, and then seek for and enforce the remedy.

Read what Sir Bamfylde Fuller writes on the physiological aspect of the question:—

"Fear and courage are two contrary nervous influences, the latter of which resists, or antagonises, and may control the former.

"That this antagonism should occur our nature must be dual—must include two distinct elements. And, arguing *a priori*, it must be so. For we are each the product of two separate living organisms—the female and the male reproductive germs—which differ very markedly in their appearance and apparent activities. It seems that we owe to one our vegetative, to the other our animative capabilities. The sciences that deal with life will hardly succeed in marshalling their discoveries convincingly until they recognise this fundamental truth. . . .

"The antagonism between the two is primitively instinctive. Hence an insect can be courageous although it has no brain. But when ideas intervene they exercise a momentous influence in swaying the conflict. For they can reinforce courage, either imaginatively, as 'ideals,' or deliberately, as thoughts of consequences. They may, on the other hand, reinforce fear. Consequently the conflict is constantly inclining itself one way or the other according to the condition of certain nerves and the character of the ideas that affect them."

The essence of College craft is to reinforce fear—and to crush out "ideals."

This is the method of *Pithecanthropus erectus*, and the conflict between him and the women whose ideas reinforce courage. "The antagonism between the two is primitively instinctive."

Who could attend a G.N.C. meeting during the past two years and not recognise signs of demoralisation through ignoble fear?

The silence. The lack of courage in support of professional reform. The fluttering anxiety to be on the safe side. The ill-disguised greed for place, promotion, power. The trickery to carry out the employers' policy. The betrayal of professional ideals, rights, and duty. The mendacious treachery to colleagues who dared to oppose this degrading course of action.

What a lesson in human baseness! The stronger to rely on the result of fear—the weaker to succumb to it! How despicable a form of tyranny, to sap the *morale* of a poorly paid and dependent class of professional women workers, securing the aid of its higher grades through social recognition, improved pay, and titular honours, in enforcing the unwritten law that promotion depends on acquiescence!

Alas! How are the mighty fallen! Where are our time-honoured ideals? Our proverbial love of truth, integrity, self-denial, devotion to duty, the sanctity of our cloth? Echo answers where!

ETHEL G. FENWICK.

(To be continued.)

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)