

HOW THE COLLEGE CAUCUS CAPTURED THE COUNCIL.

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"WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE?"

It must not be thought that the solid phalanx of reactionaries who signed the Anti-Registration Manifesto in 1889 had it all their own way. On the same day that this Protest against Registration appeared in the press a great Meeting was held at the Mansion House, E.C., in spite of angry personal opposition and interference by Dr. J. C. Steele, then Medical Superintendent of Guy's Hospital, who inquired, in true *Pithecanthropus erectus* style, "Who are these people? They have no right to the prestige of a Meeting at the Mansion House." But the then Lord Mayor and his advisers thought otherwise, and Miss Victoria Jones, the ablest Matron who ever presided over the Nursing School at Guy's, as a member of the British Nurses' Association had the courage to stand to her principles.

"These people" included Dr. and Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, at whose house the Association was inaugurated; Miss Isla Stewart, Matron and Superintendent of Nursing of St. Bartholomew's Hospital; Miss Godiva Thorold, Lady Superintendent of Middlesex Hospital; Sister Cecilia, of University College Hospital; Miss G. A. Rogers, Leicester Royal Infirmary; Miss Cureton, Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge; Miss Christina Forrest, York County Hospital; Miss Maud G. Smith, Royal Infirmary, Bristol; Miss M. Huxley, Sir Patrick Dun's Hospital, Dublin; Miss Lumsden, Royal Infirmary, Aberdeen; Miss Catherine J. Wood, Miss Margaret Brey, and many others. We especially name these ladies to prove how those who are alive have, through good and evil report, remained faithful to their profession, and seven of them have lived to see the Act for State Organisation of Nursing and Registration placed upon the Statute Book; moreover, their life's experience teaches them, that although the timorous expedientists who opposed the vital principles of nursing evolution may have grasped power for the moment, their policy of cringe and crush cannot withstand the oncoming of the hosts, who in the near future will sweep away, like leaves before the storm, all sapless obstruction. "These people" also included many of the most far-seeing medical men of that time.

Co-operation Invited and Refused.

The Mansion House Meeting, which was crowded to the doors, was addressed by

Professor Marshall (then President of the General Medical Council), Mr. (later Sir) William Savory, Sir Henry Acland, Sir James Crichton-Browne, Mr. Brudenell Carter, Dr. Matthews Duncan, and others. The Registration of Nurses by a special Board was agreed and promoted. The Association did nothing in a hurry, but approved and issued valuable Memoranda on the question—one to the General Medical Council, a second to the Chairman and Committee of Management of the principal Hospitals. To the first the Council replied that it approved the very necessary reforms suggested by the Association, but that it had no authority or power to take part in the work or to consider its details.

The replies received from the Hospitals to the circular addressed to them, inviting their co-operation, are summarised as follows, in the second annual report of the Association: "Nearly all declined to accept the proposal." The Association, having invited co-operation in forming a Registration Council, which was refused, found itself compelled to initiate the work single-handed. It received the warm support of many of the leaders of the medical profession, and finally in January, 1890, the first Registration Board was appointed. The rules and regulations were most carefully drawn up, and the first Register of Nurses was opened in February of that year, in spite of the loud vituperation of the scheme through the Burdett press, which unprincipled though paying policy was continued so long as "the giver of good ads" remained in opposition.

The First Register of Nurses.

Some seventeen hundred Nurses were enrolled during the year, and the public presentation, early in 1891, to Her Royal Highness Princess Christian of the first copy of the first Register of Nurses marked an epoch in the history of Nursing. It is needless to add that this result was not achieved without the greatest labour, while many difficulties had to be encountered and overcome. The Board frequently applied for information, concerning applicants for Registration, to the Hospitals at which they had been trained, and either received no reply at all or were informed that the hospital's books contained no information beyond the fact that a salary was paid to a Nurse of the name in question. And here it may be interjected, that the work of the Association undoubtedly led to a much greater accuracy in detailed records concerning their employees being kept by all the leading Hospitals.

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