

HOW THE COLLEGE CAUCUS CAPTURED THE COUNCIL.

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After the two days' hearing by the Privy Council of the Royal British Nurses' Association's Petition for a Royal Charter—the opposition to which by the Training Schools cost the Petitioners £1,500—and the granting of the same, in 1893, one would have hoped that the free associated nurses would have been permitted, as the nurses of all other countries have been, to go steadily forward in the attainment of their altruistic aims.

But no.

No sooner had the Association the legal powers to effect improvement and reform in nursing standards, and economic conditions, for nurses, than the Anti-registration Party began its discreditable campaign of sowing dissension in registration ranks, and to control, through medical intolerance of nursing independence, the Association's policy.

Unfortunately, Mr. E. A. Fardon, the Resident Medical Officer of Middlesex Hospital (whose Governors at that time were strongly "anti"), held the position of Hon. Medical Secretary. The test of his loyalty to the Association came when, in 1896, a vote was taken at a Conference convened by the Parliamentary Bills Committee of the British Medical Association and certain nursing bodies, on registration, when Mr. Fardon voted against the principle. When indignantly questioned later, on his conduct by nurse members of the R.B.N.A., his excuse was "that he represented the Governors of Middlesex Hospital at the Conference, and not the Association," of which he was one of the chief honorary officers.

From that time onwards the medical element on the Council and Executive Committee of the Association ranged themselves on the side of reaction, and did all in their power to minimise the benefits conferred on the nurses by their Royal Charter. In 1897 they, with the help of certain Matrons, packed the Council and re-cast the liberal Bye-Laws, depriving the nurses of certain powers, and eliminated myself from the recognition bestowed upon me in the Bye-Laws as initiator of the Registration Movement. The majority of the founder Matrons resigned (I did not) in protest, and for many years the Association was entirely controlled by the Medical Executive, which naturally stultified its natural growth, and it

was not for many years, and until the pioneers of nursing reform organised independently in the Matrons' Council, and later in the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses, and after the advent of Miss Isabel Macdonald as Secretary to the Association, that a more enlightened policy was again apparent in the work of the R.B.N.A.

In 1903 the Society for the State Registration of Nurses drafted the first Nurses' Registration Bill, which was introduced into the House of Commons by the late Dr. Farquharson, of Haughton, in 1904. The R.B.N.A. followed with a sister Bill for the same purpose, and happily in 1910 all the Societies supporting the principle of State Registration—English, Scottish, and Irish—associated themselves, together with the British Medical Association, and after conferences agreed to heartily support the same Bill, which was successively introduced into Parliament by Lord Novar, then Mr. R. C. Munro-Ferguson, and later by Dr. Chapple, from 1910 to 1914.

By this time the Anti-registration Party, led by the Governors of St. Thomas's Hospital and the London Hospital, and supported, of course, by their Matrons, the strings quietly manipulated by Sir E. Cooper Perry, then Medical Superintendent of Guy's Hospital, and voiced by a venal nursing press, had realised that the game was up, so far as opposing the State Registration of Nurses in Parliament was concerned. A flank movement had therefore to be made, and it is the inner working of this movement, with the determined aim of controlling the Nursing Profession, which I shall begin to expose next week.

ETHEL G. FENWICK.

NURSES MUST ACT WITH COURAGE.

We learn that the College of Nursing, Ltd., had an interview with the Parliamentary Medical Committee at the House of Commons on Monday, in support of the proposal to place persons with no hospital training on the General Part of the Register.

The Parliamentary Medical Committee has arranged to see a delegation from the Organised Nurses' Societies on May 14th, when the injustice to Nurses registered under present Statutory Rules, and the danger to the public of granting the title of "Registered Nurse" to untrained persons will be urged.

As some of the Members of the G.N.C. feel very strongly on the proposals of the Parliamentary Medical Committee, a Special Meeting of the Council has been summoned to consider the question this week.

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