

HOW THE COLLEGE CAUCUS CAPTURED THE COUNCIL.

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From the day the trained nurses associated themselves together in 1887 to think and act for themselves, the majority of the managers and matrons of the Training Schools let it be known that the movement had not their approval, and through the pages of the *Hospital* joined a campaign of intimidation, initiated and carried on for years by the late Sir Henry Burdett, its chief promoter, which can be studied in its pages by those interested in the history of the registration movement. As the years passed, and the organised nurses with great courage made their movement a success, certain of the enemy realised that if they could effect a flank movement, and detach certain influential persons, including those leading Matrons, like the ever-revered Isla Stewart of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, they might capture the nurses and control them. Several proposals to this effect were made to Miss Stewart—especially were they to "drop the pilot" (your humble servant), who, then married, and holding an independent position, could not be suppressed by economic pressure. One medical man at Bart.'s informed the Matron "that St. Thomas's was quite ready to come along and support registration if Mrs. B. F. and her followers could be dropped out"; and two others went so far as to tell her that they would have her turned out of Bart.'s if she opposed the policy of the medical men on the R.B.N.A."

It was on that historic occasion that Miss Stewart is reported to have said: "I will have you to know I am a Stewart of Appin," and those who know Scottish history will realise how this clan estimated treachery. Anyway, this scandalous attempt at coercion went no further.

In the year 1905, Miss Stewart rang me up to inform me that she had had a visit from the Matron of Guy's Hospital, who had invited her to join a new movement which some of the managers, and Sir E. Cooper Perry, the Medical Superintendent, were promoting, called "The Incorporated Society for Promoting the Higher Education and Training of Nurses," and asked me if I had heard of it. I replied in the negative, and advised her not to join any movement until she had its proposed constitution in writing before her. This, she replied, had been handed to her as a "private and confidential" document, but as it dealt with nurses' registration in a very dangerous form, she had at once given notice she did not intend to keep it so. I then obtained a copy of the said Memorandum, and dealt with the whole scheme in this Journal in no uncertain terms, proving that the chief enemies of State Registration were attempting, through a voluntary scheme, to grasp control of the Nursing Profession.

I wrote on February 11th, 1905:—"We make no apology to our readers for devoting the greater part of our space this week to a matter which we consider touches their liberties and their well being very nearly. We shall adopt no half measures in criticising the latest

movement to grasp control of trained nurses, and to keep this in the hands of their employers. We feel it our duty to warn the whole profession of nursing of the terrible danger which gapes at their feet, owing to the fact that seven wealthy financiers in the City of London have petitioned the Board of Trade to incorporate them as 'The Incorporated Society for Promoting the Higher Education and Training of Nurses,' with powers constituting them the organisers, disciplinarians, and masters of every trained nurse and training school in the United Kingdom. For, the powers for which they ask, mean control of the most despotic and unconstitutional character, which, if granted, would result in the reduction of a great body of educated, intelligent, professional women workers to the position of absolute serfs in the body politic. If we write strongly, it is because we feel strongly, and we realise the appalling danger with which we are confronted. We do not for a moment suppose that the gentlemen applying for incorporation by the Board of Trade know what will be the effect of the document to which they have set their hands, or that they have sought or received the opinion of any self-governing Association of Nurses on their scheme. . . . Secretly, without consulting the leaders of nursing reform, a scheme has been conceived, a constitution (which we now print in full) has been drawn up and adopted, and a Petition presented to the Board of Trade for the incorporation of a Society composed of seven laymen* which claims powers to examine, certificate, control, and discipline a body of professional women workers. . . . It is an attempt to utilise suggestions made in the Bill for the Registration of Nurses introduced into the House of Commons, and to grasp power over those nurses who for nearly twenty years have stood firmly for the great principle upon which alone a reputable profession of nursing can be founded and built up—the personal responsibility of every individual nurse.

"This essential professional principle has been totally ignored in the constitution of the Society for the Higher Education and Training of Nurses. Without it, no organisation can satisfy the aspirations of women who are worthy to form the great and noble Profession of Nursing. . . .

"Before granting the request of the signatories to the Memorandum, notice of application will be given in the public press, and an opportunity afforded to objectors to state their views, an opportunity of which the Nurses' Associations should avail themselves."

How successfully we fought, and for the time being defeated, this scheme emanating from Guy's Hospital, I will show in due course. Suffice it to say that when Sir Arthur Stanley and Sir E. Cooper Perry launched their College of Nursing Scheme for voluntary registration in 1915, its "Memorandum" was almost word for word the same old bogey.

ETHEL G. FENWICK.

* The names of the seven subscribers to the Memorandum were: Lord Rothschild, Lord Revelstoke, Mr. T. A. Hambro, Mr. S. Hope Morley, Mr. C. H. Goschen, Mr. Hugh C. Smith, and Mr. H. Cosmo O. Bonsor, all very wealthy financiers, several of alien Jewish origin, and with no right whatever to control economically the work of British Nurses.

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