

have prevented reform for a generation. It was in this wise.

The Directory of Nurses Bill.

The Central Hospital Council for London, composed of governors, secretaries and members of the honorary medical staffs of the large London hospitals, was formed ostensibly to consult about hospital matters; its real object was to prevent effective legislation for the Registration of Nurses. We once asked a medical member what he was doing in that *galère* and what business the Council transacted. He replied: "Oh, I think we once did something about milk!" At all events, in March of that year (1908) Lord Balfour of Burleigh introduced in the House of Lords a "Bill to provide for an Official Directory of Nurses," promoted privately by the 33 gentlemen who composed the Central Hospital Council for London. Once more the nursing profession had to be warned by us of its danger and called to arms.

We wrote: "When the seven financiers of the City of London suddenly launched their scheme for the control of nurses in 1905, we thought that no graver danger could threaten their liberties, but Mr. Sydney Holland and Sir Henry Burdett, the moving spirits of the Central Hospital Council for London have sprung upon the nursing profession one which is infinitely worse. That thirty-three men in London should, behind closed doors, draft a penalising Bill for the absolute government of a great body of at least 60,000 professional women, working in the three kingdoms, is such an outrage that words fail to express the indignation such conduct must inspire in every just-minded person. Although it is difficult to realise it, we live in a free country, and this is the twentieth century. We do not believe, therefore, that there is the slightest chance of the present House of Commons permitting this mediæval Bill to become law. At the same time, the fact that a noble lord has been found willing to introduce it into the Upper Chamber, presumably with the best intentions, sounds a note of warning of which we nurses must at once take heed. From this time forth there must not be the slightest doubt in our minds as to the procedure of the profession at large. We must instantly and strenuously oppose and expose such mischievous legislation. The day is long since past when women will meekly and weakly permit themselves to be deprived of liberty of conscience and freedom of action by methods which are as ingenious as they are obsolete." Suffice it to say, once again called to take action, the organised nurses in England, Scotland, and Ireland united to save their self-respect, and to safeguard the interests of the public.

Notice had been given that the Directory Bill, which was down for immediate second reading, was postponed till after the Easter Recess.

That gave us a chance, and we made the best of it. We interviewed Lord Balfour and threw some light upon his project, we bombarded "noble Lords," and yet we found great difficulty in persuading anyone of those we knew to move

the rejection of the obnoxious Bill. And just here we should like to lay great stress on the marvellous power of thought-transference.

After a tiring day in the Lobby of the House of Lords, I returned home, having been refused the help imperatively needed. I really did not personally know another Lord who could be invited to fight our cause, and yet one must be inspired to do so.

On my writing table I found a little letter from the then Matron of the County Hospital, Bedford, in which she wrote: "Do you know Lord Ampthill, our Chairman? I think, if appealed to, he would help us." I did not know Lord Ampthill, but down I sat and then and there sent him an explanatory letter, asking him to be good enough to see a few representative nurses on this all-important matter. With his unfailing courtesy this he consented to do, by return of post. We saw him, handed in our Memoranda, pleaded our cause, and asked him to move the rejection of the Directory Bill. He asked for time to consider his reply. For forty-eight hours we lived on tenter-hooks, and then I received his kind consent to champion our cause, and how splendidly he played his part, and with what success, is now a matter of history.

Lord Balfour of Burleigh put his Bill down for its second reading on May 6th, 1908. The crisis was acute, the danger imminent. The principle involved was, were the workers, or were they not, to have a voice in the making of the laws which they were to be compelled to obey? The principle in this controversy was so vital to all classes of the community that the duty of Parliament was apparent.

Lord Balfour was inundated with protests from the nurses' organisations (this was in the good old days before so many were content to be governed by the Caucus), and for once the women's societies gave a helping hand—protesting against imposing upon the nurses legal regulations which they regarded as unjust.

A Red Letter Day.

May 6th—a day of vital importance to nurses! It opened with a keen sense of anticipation of what the debate on the Directory of Nurses Bill in the Lords would bring forth. *The Times* of the day contained a letter in opposition to the measure, signed by Lord Roberts (of blessed memory), Lord Monkswell and Lord Ampthill.

The registrationists flocked to the House of Lords, and those who had obtained admission to the House below the Bar waited with the utmost eagerness for the opening of the debate. Suffice it to say, Lord Balfour of Burleigh did what he could with a bad Bill, and Lord Ampthill, in moving its rejection, covered himself with glory by his most eloquent and convincing arguments against it. Lord Tweedmouth, Lord Goschen and the Earl of Crewe supported the Bill. Lord Ashbourne, Lord Monkswell and Earl Russell spoke against it. But, of course, we all knew that the opinion of the Marquis of Lansdowne—

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