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EDITED BY MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK, REGISTERED NURSE.

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EDITORIAL.

MAKE A BONFIRE OF BAUBLES.

Parliament has now risen, and will not be sitting again until November 13th, a respite for bureaucracy it will thoroughly enjoy. Glancing back at the work of the past Session, the Nursing Profession in England and Wales has much to deplore, as it has for the time being lost nearly everything worth having—granted or made possible through the Nurses' Registration Act. Rule 9 (A) cut at the root of just professional equality by handing over to a powerful Company of employers—the College of Nursing, Ltd.—the privilege of sharing the discretion of compiling the State Register with the General Nursing Council, to which Body the duty had been deputed by Parliament. This notoriously unjust Rule—illegally thrust through Parliament by a Minister of alien origin, insolently contemptuous of the psychology of self-respecting British nurses—made it possible to pack the electorate of the General Nursing Council, and crush out self-determination, the sinister policy of the College Council, composed as it is almost entirely of rich and powerful hospital managers, titled medical practitioners, and matrons under their control. Returned to power through the College Caucus, the new G.N.C. at once succumbed to a medical dictatorship, of a peculiarly uncouth type, and proceeded to deprive future Nurses of their right to "prescribed" training, the Syllabus of which was most carefully framed by its predecessor; leaving as heretofore absolute power over their education and lives in the hands of irresponsible persons, whose financial interests are not invariably coincident with nursing efficiency.

Not satisfied with crushing out the aspirations of the promoters of State Registration—in so far as professional independence and "prescribed" training are concerned—the policy of pandering to the powerful employer has resulted, through the ignoble compact made between the Hon. Sir Arthur Stanley (Chairman, and supported by the Council of the College) and the facile Dr. Chapple, M.P.,

in knocking the bottom out of State Registration, for the time being, by rushing through Parliament a few weeks before the termination of the period of grace, a new Rule making it possible for persons to claim to be placed on the General Part of the Register without any training at all! And this in 1923, thirty years after certification after three years' systematic training has been the acknowledged standard of efficiency in all the leading Nurse Training Schools! Thus Rule 9 (1) (g) plunges Nursing away back into the Gamp stage of ignorance and demoralisation.

Then we have evidence at Headquarters of the inevitable chaos, lack of discipline and loyalty, which inevitably results from the dominating personal interference of men with women's work. It is useless for men to approve bureaucratic power for a paid official, in the hope of suppressing the rank and file of the Nursing Profession. To permit acts of impertinent autocracy—even where the nurse members of the Council are concerned—and imagine that a rag of discipline can survive so far as their own personal power and reputation is concerned, is hopeless. Any such supposition, the result of excessive sex vanity, is a delusion, and is blown to smithereens by the recent *exposé* in this Journal of the now notorious "elusive document" flouting the Act, and the explosion which resulted in the G.N.C. Office.

But if the medical dictatorship in the G.N.C. Office has proved a despicable failure, how about the sapient policy of the highly decorated College Matrons who inaugurated it? In our opinion these women have sold our birthright for pettifogging personal aggrandisement. Self-determination, self-government, educational and economic rights, and the consequent prestige in the community of the whole profession is the heavy price paid, and the bargain has resulted in sapping the fine altruistic spirit by which our noble profession was formerly inspired. If a bonfire could be made of all mean and spiritless baubles, and promotion be secured for merit and not by favour, there might be some hope for the purity and integrity

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