

# THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED  
THE NURSING RECORD

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No. 1,882.

MAY, 1925.

Vol. LXXIII.

## EDITORIAL.

### "AS OTHERS SEES US."

Now that the meeting of the International Council and Congress of Nurses is so close upon us the Nursing Question in Great Britain is receiving a considerable amount of attention from our colleagues overseas, some of whom cannot understand why there is not solidarity throughout the nursing world in this country.

A valued correspondent in Canada deplores the fact that "though it was a British Nurse who evolved the idea of an International Council of Nurses, yet our British organisation does not truly represent the entire profession," and gives as the reason that "for too many years many members of the Nursing Profession in Britain have been content to allow their professional affairs to be managed by lay people." She adds: "Surely, when the day comes that doctors, lawyers, or engineers invite us, *as nurses*, to sit on their boards, and plan the curriculum of their embryo members, it will be time for our profession to admit by similar courtesy members of other professions."

The whole question of the organisation of *nurses* (not *nursing*) in Great Britain is in a nutshell.

The National Council of Trained Nurses in Great Britain—a forceful body in which are included thousands of the most thoughtful and intelligent of the free nurses in the kingdom—stands for the organisation of nurses, through an Association composed entirely of nurses, and for self-government of nurses by nurses—a policy in harmony with that of the International Council of Nurses.

In the organisation of the College of *Nursing* (not nurses), Ltd., on the other hand, we find the principle adopted, and approved, of the government of Nurses by the laity, and the medical profession, who constitute four out of five of its executive officers.

The Profession of Nursing in Great Britain has as much right to self-government as the medical and legal professions. Why, then, this eternal demand of the profession of medicine, not to mention the laity, to the right to deprive the Nurses of Britain of freedom of speech, conscience, and action, for there is ample proof that unless nurses are left alone to manage their own affairs that is the inevitable result.

We concede precedence to no one in the desire for harmony amongst the various workers in the nursing world, but neither do we concede the right of any human being to deprive us of self-government.

It will be within the recollection of most of our readers that at the end of the thirty years' epic struggle of trained nurses in Great Britain for State Registration, the newly-formed College of Nursing, Ltd., almost succeeded in

depriving them of this right, and it did succeed, after the General Nursing Council for England and Wales had established a minimum standard for admission to the Register of Nurses of a year's training in a general hospital, followed by two years' experience, in flooding the Register at the eleventh hour of the period of grace with, we believe, some 3,000 untrained persons and V.A.D.s.

Again, nurses who demand, and have the right, to a compulsory prescribed Scheme of Training under the Nurses' Registration Act, have so far been deprived of that right, given them by Parliament, by the laity, members of the medical profession, and the majority of the Matrons, on the General Nursing Council.

The same clique demands that the Registered Nurses shall have practically no representation on the General Nursing Council, for in the Schedule for the election of Direct Representatives of the Registered Nurses in England and Wales on that Council, which it has submitted to the Minister of Health for his approval, it is proposed that only two out of eleven representatives shall be elected on their free vote, and that, in relation to the other nine, they shall be compelled to vote for candidates under the domination of hospital Governors, in contradistinction to Scotland, where the election of Registered Nurses on the General Nursing Council is thrown entirely open.

The deprivation of the right of self-government of nurses by nurses in this country in their Professional Associations, and on their Governing Body, the General Nursing Council for England and Wales is one which should be opposed at all costs.

We commend these points to every nurse attending the meeting of the International Council of Nurses convened for next July, when the question of self-government in that International Council may come up for discussion, and when it may be thought possible that influence may be brought to bear to deprive the nurses of this great International Federation of this fundamental right.

### MEMORIAL TO PRINCESS CHRISTIAN.

A letter appeared in *The Times* of April 28th, signed by the Right Hon. Austen Chamberlain, M.P., Sir Alfred Bower, Lord Mayor of London, Lord Marshall of Chipstead, Sir Charles Wakefield and Mr. Herbert Paterson, F.R.C.S., putting before the readers of that influential journal the proposals for a memorial to Princess Christian. Most appropriately it was decided at a meeting held at the Mansion House in May last "that the proposed memorial should take the form of a Club or Home for working nurses," and the writers of the letter say, "such a scheme would serve to perpetuate and enlarge what the Princess prophetically described as her last piece of work for the nurses."

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