

all the improvement in surgical education, all the prestige now attached to Surgeons, have been practically obtained in the last 127 years, since they became an absolutely independent and self-governing body. Whereas, as I have shown you, during the whole of the previous four hundred years, whilst they were dependent upon outside authority, they made no advance, or comparatively little, in the science and art of Surgery, in the usefulness of their work to the public, and in the prestige in which they were held. In other words, this story supplies an irresistible argument that no profession can hope to improve either its work, or its professional or its public standing, whilst it is shackled and fettered by outside and inexperienced authority. Just as the development of the human body must come from within itself, so the development, and therefore the independence of an individual, or of any profession, must come from its own self-development and freedom.

Now, let us apply our argument and our story to the British College of Nurses. We have utilised in its formation the invaluable teaching of History, and so we start from where the Royal College of Surgeons, after eighty years of development, arrived; that is to say, this College is to be governed by a President, two Vice-Presidents and a Council of twelve, and it is to be composed of Fellows and Members who are, and shall in future be, nurses registered by Act of Parliament. Its examinations, of different severity for the Fellowship and Membership, will, therefore, be of a higher standard than that required for the minimum qualification of State Registration. It needs no argument to prove that the institution of such higher standards of knowledge and proficiency in nursing must be for the benefit of the public at large. That is to say, for the benefit of the sick of all classes upon whom nurses are required to attend. The British College of Nurses is, therefore, a purely democratic body composed solely of the highest class of trained nurses, independent of all outside patronage or authority, or the interference or domination which comes from such authority; free to carry out the special wishes and wants of the nursing profession for trained nurses, while of course its individual members will always remain subject to the authority of the Physicians and Surgeons under whom they have to attend upon the sick. In other words, the British College of Nurses offers, for the first time, to trained nurses the power to manage their own affairs, and, as the story I have told you proves, they are thus given the opportunity of free and unfettered development in future.

There are various points, however, in which the British College of Nurses have, I think, wisely adopted ancient customs. For example, it is arranged that the President, Vice-Presidents and Council, shall, at their meetings, wear distinctive Academic Robes, and, if I may venture to say so, I think you will agree with me that those Robes which you see on this platform are very handsome and dignified. The first clause of the Trust Deed founding this College provides that all meetings of the College, of the Council, and of its Committees, shall be opened with Prayer, as is the ancient custom of the Houses of Parliament and other great institutions. In the next place, the Trustees have arranged that every member of the Council shall be paid, if she attends the meetings of the Council and Committees, the sum of £100 per year, in order to cover her expenses, such as for travelling, hotel bills, and so forth, in attending upon those meetings; because the Trustees can see no reason why women alone should be, as it has hitherto been the custom, called upon to defray their expenses in the performance of public work, entirely at their own cost.

I would take this opportunity of answering one or two questions which have been put to us.

First, why this body is called the British College of Nurses. The word College is derived from the Latin word *Collegium*—a collection or association of persons engaged

in the same occupation or vocation, as, for example, the ancient Roman College of Priests, the Mediæval College of Cardinals, and the Heralds College of England, the Royal College of Surgeons, and now the British College of Nurses, whilst the old Colleges of students or members of a University are familiar to us all. In other words, the word College, properly and grammatically applied, involves the association of *persons*, not of things or trades, to which it has been of recent years somewhat wrongly applied. And the word British we have taken to show the world-wide association to which this College aspires in gathering to its ranks the best trained nurses of the whole British Empire.

In the next place, this College has made a comparatively new departure in its democratic constitution, which is important for you to understand. Other bodies only admit to their governing authority the highest members they possess. For example, the Royal College of Surgeons and the Royal College of Physicians, have Councils composed only of their Fellows. But the British College of Nurses has considered it more democratic to have on its Council three Members as representatives of the Members of the College. Consequently, each year after this, that is to say, in July, 1928, and thereafter, the Fellows of the College will be asked by ballot-papers, to vote for three of their number to serve for three years on the Council, while the Members will be similarly asked to vote for one Member to represent themselves on the Council for the following three years. The Council, at its meeting each July, will, as vacancies occur in the office of President or Vice-Presidents, elect to those offices Fellows who have served as Vice-Presidents or as Members of Council, respectively.

Finally, we have been asked why the first gift of £100,000 founding and endowing this College, was given anonymously. There were two reasons for this: the first was that the donor is one of those persons, unhappily rather rare at the present time, who as the poet said, prefer to "do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame." The second reason is, perhaps, best explained by a recent occurrence which you may have noticed in the papers. It was stated that a gentleman had recently been left a legacy of about £10,000, and the very day after this announcement appeared he received over three hundred begging letters, and his house was invaded by a queue of equally hopeful mendicants. The Trustee of our anonymous Donor, therefore, made it a strict and honourable undertaking of the gift, that the Donor should not be subjected to such persecution, so that the gift should be, and be strictly maintained, as anonymous.

Now, what has the Council done in the first year of its existence, which ends to-day? It has constituted the College and its Council on firm and substantial foundations. It has, after most careful scrutiny, elected a good many hundred Fellows and Members from every part of the British Empire whom you represent to-day. It has drawn up for presentation to them a very handsome Diploma. It has succeeded in purchasing the lease of one of the finest houses, in one of the finest private streets in London, as the future Headquarters of the College and as a meeting place for its Fellows and Members. It has drawn up schemes for the great and permanent advantage of its Fellows and Members, chief amongst which are the setting aside each year of £2,000 to form a Pension Fund for old and distressed Fellows or Members unable to continue their work. This Fund has to accumulate for ten years, when it is expected to reach the amount of some £25,000. Then in July, 1936, one Pension will be awarded to a Fellow of £52 a year for life, and one Pension to a Member of £26 a year for life. To give you a little idea of the amount to which this Pension Fund will reach in future, you must remember that in fifty years from to-day, the Pension Fund will have a capital invested of more than £100,000.

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