

modest and modish bonnet. I was not successful. "Go away and paint a few wrinkles in your face," said a facetious physician. On returning to the London Hospital, where I was a Sister, I removed the delusive "Lady Lucy" and promptly sat upon it. I felt it had not played the game.

Six months later, pinched into original shape, the "Lady Lucy" appeared before the Treasurer and Almoners of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, when on that happy April day in the year 1881 they elected me Matron and Superintendent of Nursing of that historic hospital. I generously forgave the "Lady Lucy."

THE BONNET WHICH NEVER MATERIALISED.

In the seventies untrained Matrons of hospitals did not wear uniform, they made their rounds in merino, bonnets, and gloves.

We of the younger generation, professionally ambitious, placed the art of nursing before official decorum.

Thus I entered the Board Room at St. Bartholomew's Hospital to attend my first Committee wearing a black uniform gown and a finely goffered cap.

Imagine my horror when one of the dear old Almoners expressed the opinion that the Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital should wear a *bonnet* when attending Committees and visiting the wards!

"A senior official of a Royal Hospital," he argued, "should not wear livery." "How," he questioned, "could the Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital support its dignity—and that of her position—in a cap, a badge of servitude?"

The new Matron ventured to suggest that professional uniform was not domestic livery, that her nurse's cap was the symbol of her professional status as Chief Nurse in the hospital, and added that if the dignity of the hospital was dependent on a bonnet, it was supported on a very ephemeral foundation. What became known as the "battle of the bonnet" was keenly debated at several meetings of the Committee.

The Matron remained firm.

The bonnet never materialised.

The dear old Almoner buried the war hatchet, invited the Matron to dinner at Highgate—at which she "wore her own hair" no offending cap—and was one of her kindest of friends for many a year.

The offending cap served as a model, and was widely adopted by her colleagues in the last century.

THE POKE AND THE PRINCESS.

My first glimpse of the lovely face of Alexandra, Princess of Wales, was on her bridal visit to Belvoir Castle. It was shadowed in a "poke" bonnet, but none the less charming for that.

Later Her Royal Highness designed the dainty little bonnet to be universally known as the "Princess." We all wore it for years and years, made in silk, satin, velvet or *tulle*, and as we saw so many pretty faces in those days, it was undoubtedly a becoming fashion.

NURSING BONNETS.

The religious still wear enveloping bonnets, but the ante-war nursing bonnets—so neat and professional—have been discarded for more or less crumpled veils—and dusty felt hats.

Those of us who fortunately live in early eighteenth

century "dolls' houses" in the shadow of Westminster's august Abbey, catch a glimpse now and then of nurses attired in the neatest of little black bonnets, or the most dainty of goffered net caps, worn by Westminster Hospital nurses, and as all these nurses have charming faces, surely the bonnets should be given some credit for this pleasing effect.

Did I, or did I not, hear little "Professor Pokenose" murmur something about "grandmother's cuckoo"? Oh! surely not!

ETHEL G. FENWICK.

OUTSIDE THE GATES.

The subscriptions received by the Treasurer to date, at 103, Kingsway, London, W.C., to the Thank-Offering Fund for the King's recovery amount to over £400,000.

No one is really satisfied with the result of the General Election—the Conservatives because they have lost 140 seats, mostly to Labour; the latter because their majority of about 35 is not a safe working majority; and the Liberals because they are so greatly in the minority that it is time they realised there is no demand for three political parties in the country, and for the future Constitutionalists and Socialists might well gather in all politicians who are not "cranks."

Mr. Baldwin presented the resignation of his Government to the King at Windsor Castle, which His Majesty was graciously pleased to accept on June 4th.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was summoned to Windsor on June 5th, and accepted office at the hands of the King. As we go to press the new Cabinet is being announced. Women are to be given a few plums in the Labour Government.

Women have not done so badly in the Election, as so many contended hopeless constituencies.

Six have been re-elected—the Duchess of Atholl, Lady Astor (by a greatly reduced majority), Lady Iveagh (Conservatives), and Miss Margaret Bondfield, Miss Ellen Wilkinson, and Miss Susan Lawrence (Labour).

The eight new women members are: Miss Megan Lloyd George (Liberal), Lady Cynthia Mosley, Mrs. Mary Hamilton, Dr. Ethel Bentham, Miss E. Picton-Turberville, Dr. Marion Phillips, and Miss Jenny Lee (Labour), and Miss Eleanor Rathbone (Independent).

Let us hope women will take more interest in Professional Nursing in the new Parliament than they did in the old. Even those really interested in social reform have yet failed to grasp its true significance in the general wellbeing of humanity.

Nurses will welcome Dr. Christopher Addison back to political life, as when Minister of Health in 1919, although he was unable to prevent Sir Richard Barnett's Registration Bill being torpedoed by the College of Nursing advocates, he kept his promise that the Government would at once bring in a Nurses' Registration Bill, which Bill passed into law in December, 1919. Do not let us forget we owe gratitude to Dr. Addison for keeping faith with us—so many political promises are merely pie-crusts.

ADDRESSES TO NOTE AND REMEMBER.

MESSRS. GAYLER & POPE, LTD., Nurses' Outfitters, 112-117, High Street, Marylebone, London, W.1. State uniform a speciality.

MESSRS. J. G. INGRAM & SON, LTD., The London India Rubber Works, Hackney Wick, London, E.9. Specialists in India Rubber Products for over 80 years.

JOHNSON & JOHNSON, LTD., Slough and London. Specialists in Baby Powder (Borated Talcum).

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)