

I will not, therefore even rehearse to you the details of the many technical and organising achievements of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, or the distinguished positions which she occupies. I will, however, permit myself to say this—and I can say it with no fear that it will either be contradicted or considered in the smallest degree exaggerated—Mrs. Bedford Fenwick is in the direct tradition of those truly great women who have done so much to forward the progress of their sex and to help suffering humanity in general by their personalities and powers of organisation. I regard Mrs. Bedford Fenwick as the Florence Nightingale of our days. I say this advisedly, for behind the saintly picture of Florence Nightingale as the "Lady with the Lamp," which was how the soldiers saw her in the Crimean War, there lay the reality of an able and determined woman of strong character, high professional ability and great organising powers, who battled for years against the reactionary forces of ignorance and authority, and who successfully won her battle.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I ask you to consider whether these words in which I have endeavoured to present to you a true picture of Florence Nightingale are not every one of them equally applicable to Mrs. Bedford Fenwick?

There is one other thing which I will permit myself to say in this regard. As you all know, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick has been for over forty years the leader of the movement which lead to the recognition of the nursing profession by Parliament, as embodied in the present State Register of Nurses. It is for us in Parliament to see that this life's work of this distinguished lady is not now whittled down years after she achieved it.

During the year which I have now passed as your representative in Parliament, I have been privileged to come increasingly close to various representative institutions in that important part of my Constituency known by the generic term of "Harley Street." I have come to learn something of its special needs and difficulties, and I have not lost an opportunity of assuring those with whom I have come into contact of my willingness to help them in any Parliamentary matter when the occasion arose.

I daresay that some of you, and even some of those others who have heard me, may have thought that promises were cheap enough—were, in fact, the politicians' small change.

In addressing the Members of the British College of Nurses to-night I am delighted that in the case of their branch of the great profession of healing, such an opportunity has actually presented itself, enabling me to demonstrate that my promises were true coin. I refer, of course, to the Measure now before Parliament—the Nurses' Registration Act (1919) Amendment Bill. Having received protests against this measure from all the most representative institutions safeguarding the interests of the State Registered Nurses of this country, it was with the utmost pleasure that I took the earliest opportunity of putting down a blocking motion in the House of Commons. This piece of Parliamentary procedure insures that the Measure shall not go forward unopposed, and gives me, as the proposer of the motion, the opportunity of stating the case for the State Registered Nurses against this proposed invasion of their ranks by those who have not troubled to avail themselves of their former opportunities for registration. This case, Ladies and Gentlemen, appears to me an overwhelmingly strong one, and I intend to present it to the utmost of my ability. In this connection, I am glad to be able to inform you that Sir Gerald Hurst, K.C., M.P., who represents the Moss-Side Division of Manchester, has also put his name down in support of this motion. I trust that with Sir Gerald's powerful support I will be able to prove to you how real and deep is my interest in your cause.

I consider it a happy coincidence that I, who should be able to assist in resisting any attempt on the Nurses' Registration, should to-night have the honour of proposing the toast of that great lady who was so instrumental in bringing about that Act which has been of such great use to the Nursing Profession in general.

Captain Cunningham-Reid on resuming his seat was warmly applauded and the Toast was acclaimed with right good will.

THANKS FROM THE CHAIR.

Mrs. Bedford Fenwick said: I rise to thank Captain Cunningham-Reid, M.P., for the handsome manner in which he has proposed the Toast of "The Chair." I will not disclaim his tribute to my life's work for the organisation of the Nursing Profession. It has been an arduous task, but, thanks to the devoted help of many colleagues, we have lived to realise extraordinary results and progress. It took thirty years' strenuous effort to secure State controlled Nursing Education and Registration, and I urge upon our younger nurses to jealously guard the privileges already attained. In this connection, we are proud to have with us to-night Miss E. M. Musson, the Chairman of the General Nursing Council.

Our Champion in the House of Commons—the late Sir Richard Barnett—has passed away, but we are indeed fortunate in having secured the interest and enthusiastic support of the young Member of Parliament who represents our constituency and who has already given evidence of his intelligent interest in our professional affairs. We welcome Captain Cunningham-Reid as the successor of Sir Richard Barnett in the House of Commons. This has been a most inspiring gathering. The lives of the Royal Nurses are an example for all time.

In conclusion, I state without fear of contradiction, that the Nursing Profession is at the service of King and Country to the last red drop of its blood.

The speech was greeted with loud applause.

George McKinnon, Esq., M.B., Ch.B., Amateur Champion Piper for Scotland, then delighted the guests by playing March, A Highland Wedding, Strathspey, Balmoral Castle, Reel, Pretty Marion, in honour of the "Pearl of Scotland," and Miss Isabel Macdonald the Orator of the Royal Nurses.

The guests said good night with warm expressions of thanks to the strains of the National Anthem.

WHO DRESSED THE QUEENS ?

On all sides the costumes of the Queens were approved for their taste and magnificence, and "Where did they come from?" was asked by many guests.

It is only fair, therefore, that credit should be given to Messrs. H. & M. Rayne, Ltd., of 15, Rupert Street, Shaftesbury Avenue, W.1, who designed and made these gorgeous gowns, dainty coifs, and jewelled crowns and headresses.

Pageantry in the teaching of history is very popular. The Nursing profession will now know where they can obtain every requirement for staging their tableaux.

ANNIVERSARY OF FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE'S BIRTHDAY.

May 12th was the anniversary of Florence Nightingale's Birthday, when it was celebrated by the placing of beautiful wreaths of flowers on the Florence Nightingale Memorial in Waterloo Place. The flowers from the Nightingale School at St. Thomas's always have the place of honour facing south. The British Red Cross Society also celebrated the event. The anniversary was honoured all over the Empire.

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