

what reasonable, honest and fair reason could Sir James Crichton-Browne have for rejecting a resolution, which was a vote of censure on himself and his own management of the affairs of this Association, when he rejects it on the slight and paltry ground that the thing was not registered; even if he did honestly think it was not a registered letter, seeing that document? Now, gentlemen, that being the case, this not being, as I say, a solitary act, but it being an act at last in which Sir James Crichton-Browne declared himself, as he declared himself over and over again so much a partisan—and a Chairman should not be a partisan—there being a strong party of medical men, and that it had come to this that the leading Matrons in the Association had no voice in the management of their affairs, they felt that at last the moment had come when they must really take some steps to assert their rights in the Association. Therefore Miss Breay wrote, or instructed her solicitors to write, this letter to Sir James Crichton-Browne. The letter is on the 19th of August:—"Dear Sir, Our client, Miss M. Breay, of Inglewood, Fleet, Hants, instructs us that she is a member of the Royal British Nurses' Association, that as such she duly sent to the Secretary notice of a motion to be submitted to the Annual General Meeting of the Association held on the 22nd ult.; that you were the Chairman, and refused to allow such motion to be brought forward. The motion referred to had appeared upon the advertised agenda of the meeting, and was no doubt in effect a vote of censure upon the members of the Executive Committee, including yourself; you attempted to justify your action upon the technical ground that Miss Breay's letter enclosing her notice of motion was not registered in accordance with the bye-laws, but on Miss Breay at once producing for your examination the Post Office certificate of registration, you still alleged, even after reading the certificate of registration, that the letter was not registered, and you persisted in declining to allow the matter to be dealt with. The Post Office authorities have since stated that the receipt given on the delivery of Miss Breay's registered letter was actually signed by Miss Guiseppi, the acting Secretary of the Association, who sat near you when you made and persisted in the above statement. The course taken by you was a gross invasion of our client's rights, and one of such a nature that we fail to see in what form she can now seek reparation for the wrong done her except by an action to establish her rights and those of other members of the Association, as of late, according to our instructions, there is only too much reason to say that such rights have been denied to them by certain influential members of the Association, and we fear we must add by yourself in particular. Our client feels that it is absolutely necessary that the privileges conferred by the Royal Charter should be maintained, and that there is no other course open to vindicate these rights than by an action. It is therefore with the greatest reluctance and regret, and with the sole object of establishing authoritatively the rights of our client and the duties of certain members of the Executive of the Association, that she has instructed us to take legal proceedings against you." Then, gentlemen, an answer came to that letter from the gentlemen who act as the solicitors of the Association, but who were acting for Sir James Crichton-Browne as well on this occasion. The answer was on the 25th of August, 1896. This letter was written on the 19th. Very likely in August, Sir James Crichton-

Browne was away, but I think between the 19th and the 25th the writ in the action had been issued. I am not sure that is so, but I believe it had. On the 25th of August, 1896, they write: "Sir James Crichton-Browne has forwarded us your letter to him of the 19th inst., the contents of which we note. It is only fair that we should inform you that the letter in question is not stamped, nor does it bear any mark to indicate that it was sent by registered post. The certificate of registration to which you refer is, we believe, merely a certificate of express delivery. If, as your client alleges, the letter was sent by registered post, the fault lies with the Post-Office officials who omitted to register it, and for their default our client cannot, of course, be held responsible. We observe that you make certain general allegations against Sir James Crichton-Browne and other members of the Association, but as you do not specify them in any way it is impossible for us to deal with them." The clients knew perfectly well what they were. "The Executive Committee were, and are, desirous that Miss Breay's motion should be brought on and dealt with, as they are fully prepared to meet the charges she has made against them, and, if Miss Breay wishes, we have no doubt we can arrange for a Special General Meeting to be called, when her motion can be considered." Then they say they fail to see what damage Miss Breay has sustained by reason of the resolution not being put.

Mr. MUIR MACKENZIE: Will you read the last sentence?

Mr. SCARLETT: Certainly. "We fail to see what damage Miss Breay can have suffered, but, in any event, it can only be sentimental; and the only object to be obtained by a second action at law would be to further damage the Association—a thing which we should have thought every member of the Association would have striven to avoid. If, however, your client determines to proceed, we will accept service on behalf of our client." Gentlemen, I must refer, now that my friend has forced me to read that, to what they call the first action. The first action was this: You know I told you there was a young girl who criticised the conduct of the Committee, and who said there was mismanagement because her voting paper was not received. The answer was a letter of the Executive Committee to say that they were going to call a meeting for the purpose of striking her name off from the list of members of the Association, the charter saying that such a proceeding can only be taken for moral delinquency or improper professional conduct. Gentlemen, when she was threatened like that, she at once caused to be written several letters to know whether they intended to take such a step or not, to which she never got a definite answer. It was a cruel thing against a young girl who had just entered the professional world.

Mr. MUIR MACKENZIE: I have nothing to do with it, nor had the Executive Committee, against which this motion was brought. The Executive Committee was subject to a re-election in the October following. It is wasting the time of your Honour.

Mr. SCARLETT: You forced me to read this paragraph of the letter. She had to take proceedings to restrain them, and she was successful—at least, when it came before the court they said they never intended to strike her name off, and they had to pay the costs. Now, gentlemen, you will see what our letter was, and you will see what the reply was. The

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