

the *Nurses' Journal* over the signature of Mr. Brudenell Carter, attacking the founder of the Association—Mrs. Bedford Fenwick. That attack was sent through the medium of the *Journal* to every member of the Royal British Nurses' Association. Mrs. Bedford Fenwick took the obvious course of writing a letter, in her own defence, to the Editorial Committee of the *Nurses' Journal*, naturally expecting that, as a matter of the most ordinary fair play, they would insert her communication. The Editorial Committee, then as now, consisted chiefly of the officials of the Association, and these persons deliberately suppressed Mrs. Fenwick's letter and thus prevented her from making any defence or reply to the false and misleading statements concerning her which they had published and disseminated. We are informed that this proceeding appears to some honourable men and women to be almost incredible. But it is a fact which is beyond dispute.

Condemnatory comments continued to appear in the Editorial column of the *Nurses' Journal* upon the criticisms which certain members of the Association felt it their duty to make, concerning its mismanagement. Some of these comments finally appeared to the legal advisers of Dr. Bedford Fenwick to be distinctly libellous, and with reference to those appearing in the number of the *Nurses' Journal* for August, 1896, he wrote a letter to Miss Josephine de Pledge, the nominal Editor of that *Journal*, defending himself from the attacks therein made upon him, and asking for the insertion of his letter in the November number of that *Journal*. This letter was received by Miss de Pledge ten days before that issue of the *Journal* appeared, but Miss de Pledge wrote that it had been received too late for insertion. In his desire to avoid litigation, Dr. Fenwick's solicitors then requested—that is to say in November, 1896—that his letter of explanation should be printed in the February issue of the *Journal*; but they entirely failed to obtain any definite answer. Consequently, in default of being able otherwise to defend himself, Dr. Fenwick brought an action for libel against Miss de Pledge.

The officials of the Royal British Nurses' Association then proposed to the Executive Committee that the Treasurer, Mr. John Langton; the Medical Honorary Secretary, Mr. Edward A. Fardon, of the Middlesex Hospital; and the Nurse Honorary Secretary,

Mrs. Florence Dacre Craven, should be appointed as a Sub-Committee with power to defend the action brought against Miss de Pledge, out of the funds of the Association. Now the purposes and powers of the Association are very distinct and definite, and in the Royal Charter are defined as follows:—

(1) The founding and maintenance of schemes for the benefit of Nurses in the practice of their profession, and in times of adversity, sickness and old age.

(2) The maintenance of an office or offices for supplying information to persons seeking for Nurses, and to persons seeking for employment as Nurses.

(3) The maintenance and publication of a list of persons who may have applied to the Corporation to have their names entered therein as Nurses, and whom the Corporation may think fit to enter therein from time to time, coupled with such information about each person so entered, as to the Corporation from time to time may seem desirable.

(4) The promotion of conferences, public meetings and lectures in connection with the general work of the Corporation.

(5) The doing anything incidental or conducive to carrying into effect the foregoing purposes.

The Charter also expressly declares "that the Corporation shall apply its profits, if any, or other income, solely in promoting its objects (as above defined) and for no other purpose." Miss Margaret Breay, in common with other members of the Corporation, believed that it was, thus, beyond the power of the Association to employ its funds in paying the legal expenses of proceedings taken by one member against another. She, therefore, applied to the High Court of Chancery to restrain the officials from such an expenditure of the funds, and it will be seen from the decision of Mr. Justice North, which we quoted verbatim last week, that the Judge not only considered that there was a good ground for Miss Breay's action, but that he immediately granted an Injunction preventing the officials from so spending any of the funds of the Association until her action had been tried and the question as to their powers in the matter had been decided. We will not make any comment at present upon this decision, but the importance of it to the members of the Association requires no explanation; and we consider that every Nurse is indebted to Miss Breay for seeking to obtain a judicial decision on so crucial a question.

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