

whom we distrust because they will not give us fair representation on the executive committee. This is especially injurious where the interests of nurses in the Provinces are concerned, as they are practically now without a voice on the executive committee. All the original aims of the Association are being thrust aside, and the executive committee are doing nothing to forward our interests in any way, and when we would speak for ourselves they combine to force silence on us.

If the meeting on Wednesday will make public this condition of affairs it will earn the gratitude of the nursing profession.

I am, Sir, yours truly,

HENRIETTA C. POOLE,
Member of the General Council R.B.N.A.

National Eye and Ear Infirmary,
Molesworth Street, Dublin.

To the Chairman.

SIR,—As I made a point of being present at the annual meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association in July, to make a personal protest against the mismanagement of our Association by the present honorary officers and executive committee, I regret I am unable to attend another meeting in London so soon.

If there is time I shall be obliged if my views can be brought before the meeting, as I am in warm sympathy with those members who have the courage to publicly protest against the present condition of affairs, and I wish to be classed amongst them.

It has long been an open secret that the nurse members of the Association have been denied the right of free speech in their official meetings, usually from the chair, and that if they have dared to protest against the official tyranny, they have been intimidated, and publicly insulted in our official journal, which is issued quarterly, and edited by the honorary officers—that any reply to these personal attacks in our journal has been excluded by the editorial committee, thus leaving false and defamatory statements unanswered. This unprincipled system has become intolerable, and the good name of no nurse member is safe from attack. No doubt various speakers present will deal with the whole question of our grievances much better than I can by letter, but I would ask those present to help the Matron and nurse members of the Royal British Nurses' Association to obtain a public inquiry into the whole question, when we feel sure the present officials will not be permitted to continue to tyrannise over us. To the press we must appeal to make our case as public as possible, and I ask them, one and all, to support our claim for liberty of conscience, free speech, and fair play.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,
CLARA LEE, Lady Superintendent.

The Maidstone Epidemic.

THE week's news of the increase of enteric fever at Maidstone is very disheartening, there having been notified upwards of one thousand six hundred patients, and nearly one hundred deaths; but we are glad to learn that fifty sufferers are now convalescent and are ready to leave the hospitals for convalescent homes, to make room for acute cases. Everyone is agreed that the Town Council is fortunate in having secured the services of Miss Plowman as Superintendent of Nursing, and that, under her direction, the nursing of the sick, once in the emergency hospital, is exceedingly well done; but although several new centres for the reception of the patients have been opened during the past week, hundreds of poor people cannot be received owing to the lack of beds, and, in consequence, the nursing of the sick in their own homes is done under great difficulties. The system of district nursing is good as far as it goes; but we could wish it was possible for it to go further. Indeed, the lack of trained and skilled nurses on night duty appears to be the weak spot of organization for relief. The nurses deputed to nurse in the districts begin their work about 9 a.m. and work until 1 p.m., when they return to wherever they are lodging for lunch; they rest until tea-time, and then, about 4.30, start off again and work till 8 or 9 p.m. The majority of patients are looked after at night by volunteers—not necessarily trained—and by relations and friends; and many sad cases occur, where, with the best intentions in the world, the poor patient has suffered from lack of efficient nursing and sanitary surroundings. For instance, how is it possible for the poor house-mother, with a drunken husband, to sit up all night and care for two, or more, children down with fever, all of whom in their crowded home may have to share a bed with a brother or sister? or, worse still, the good house-mother may be herself the patient. Then, indeed, the case of the family is sad. We could wish that a larger staff of trained nurses could be employed in the districts at night. Plenty are ready and willing to undertake the duty, and they could easily be organized into local bands, under efficient night superintendents. We have had several complaints of services refused. The news is welcome that the Lord Mayor of London has opened a fund at the Mansion House for the relief of

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