

Honorary Officers and the present Executive Committee, in dragging the name of the daughter of our beloved Queen into the present heated controversy. We condemn their policy as disloyal in the extreme, in utilizing the name of our Royal President to back reports and suggestions which they know are bitterly distasteful to many of the nurse members of the Royal British Nurses' Association—reports which would not be accepted for one moment unless the signature of the President was attached to them. If the present policy of the Medical Honorary Officers, and their supporters in the Executive Committee, is for the benefit of the nursing profession, let them take, on their own shoulders, the responsibility for the betrayal of the principles upon which we founded our Association, and which our President has publicly advocated, without, in the most cowardly manner, shifting the responsibility of the denial of legal and personal rights to the members, and the flat contradiction of her own words, upon the Royal Lady, who has gained the gratitude of every nurse member of the Association by the courage with which she supported the true interests of the nurses in their appeal for the Royal Charter of Incorporation.

BEFORE us, now, is the statement issued by our Royal President, and signed by her own hand in 1894, giving to the world the aims of the Royal British Nurses' Association. Amongst them, it is written "It is the hope of the Corporation that the time is not far distant, when the State will see the importance of recognizing a definite diploma of nursing, and of giving its official sanction to the maintaining of the Register of Trained Nurses." But Mr. Fardon and Miss Wedgewood publicly voted in 1896 for a Resolution declaring that such State sanction would be injurious to nurses, *and by their votes carried, that Resolution.* Comments would be quite superfluous.

THE Members' Rights Defence Committee was formed to maintain the rights and privileges granted to the nurse members of the Corporation in 1893, namely, the right of mutual co-operation amongst British Nurses for professional benefit; to obtain registration and legal status for trained nurses. It also intends to protest against the tyranny over, and mismanagement of, our Association by the present Honorary Officers and their medical supporters; and to demand liberty of speech for every Member within our Association. These are human rights of which we believe British men and women will not see the nurses of England deprived by a handful of medical men, who bitterly resent, from interested motives, the independence of a body of educated trained nurses. The question of the future relations of the trained

nurse to the medical man is one of immense importance to the public. In our well-disciplined nursing schools the medical staff are not responsible for the personal conduct of the nurses—this authority rests with the matron and the lay committee—the latter body carefully maintaining the balance of power between the medical and nursing departments, and with the most happy results.

ON the other hand, in our Poor Law infirmaries the medical superintendent is *legally* the master of the matron; how this system answers is best gathered from the reports of the disorganized condition of many Poor Law infirmaries as constantly reported in the daily press. No man should ever be responsible for the personal conduct of any woman, least of all those who belong to an allied profession, whose interests are not always identical. Public scandal, as in the present revolt of the independent members of the Royal British Nurses' Association, is the inevitable result, and those attempted autocrats who are valiant enough behind closed doors, but whose evident dread of a public inquiry into their conduct is becoming widely recognized and ridiculed, are unwittingly forcing forward, at their own expense, the most important Nursing reforms.

THE Members' Rights Defence Committee have appealed to a number of their fellow members on the Royal British Nurses' Association to petition the Privy Council not to sanction the new code of Bye-laws, drawn up by the Honorary Officers, until a full inquiry has been held into the present management of the Association, and we are glad to hear that the appeal is being widely responded to, and, amongst others, *by upwards of seventy matrons*—a fact of the utmost significance and importance. This action upon the part of those who are determined not to be deprived of their just rights and privileges without a protest, is being bitterly resented by the Honorary Officers, Dr. Bezly Thorne, and the medical members attached to the Middlesex Hospital. As these compose the Journal Committee of the Association they will, no doubt, issue some sort of a manifesto to the nurse members, through the medium of the *Nurses' Journal*.

NURSE members must, however, estimate any statements made in the "official organ," or rather "the officials' organ," at its true value; and it is right that they should know that any statement printed will be the *ex parte* assertions of the impugned officials, and emanate from them alone. Under these circumstances, any manifesto issued will carry very little weight with the members, and certainly none with the public.

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