

"Dirleton,  
"Oldfield Road, Bath,  
"December 16th.

"To the Members of the Royal British Nurses' Association assembled in special meeting, 20, Hanover Square, December 17th.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—As I am unavoidably prevented from attending this meeting, I beg leave as one of the earliest members to appeal to my fellow members to think well before they vote for the adoption of the new Bye-Laws. There is no doubt that if these are sanctioned by the Privy Council the subjection of the matrons, and consequently of the nurse members under the heel of the Hon. Medical Officers is complete.

"In every detail practical power is taken from the nurses. The power to call a special Council Meeting is made prohibitive, by raising the number of signatures from fifty to one hundred, so making it almost impossible, and by the substitution of the word 'request' for 'demand.' A request may be refused, whereas a demand gives legal rights to call a meeting. Are you content that it is left absolutely in the power of the Executive to define the qualifications of a trained nurse, so that at any moment we may find asylum attendants admitted to our register?

"Are you content that the matrons of your training schools should be insulted by supervision annually, so that their seats are not *ex-officio*, and they would merely sit so long as they were content to be nonentities? Law 25 provides the officials with power to remove any matron who during the previous year has shown evidence of conscientious intelligence.

"Are you content that the name of Mrs. Bedford Fenwick shall be removed because she has given offence by opposing illegal and autocratic government on the part of the officers?

"Are you content to be governed by one official, who has voted against the very *raison d'être* of the Association?

"Are you content to be governed by another who, to carry an autocratic point, resorted to an illegal quibble? Remember that Miss Breay won her case in the first instance; it was lost in the second on a legal technicality.

"Are you content to leave it to be understood by the public that any opposition to illegal authority is a rebellion of nurses as such, against medical men as such? I think not. Let me remind you that we nurses of to-day hold in trust the liberty of conscience and the professional status of those who come after, and that we must be firm and courageous, and fight for right, however unpleasant.

"Yours faithfully,  
"J. P. JAMIESON."

"Hotel Bon Accueil,  
"Montreux,  
"Switzerland.

"To the Members of the Royal British Nurses' Association.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—Being unable, through distance, to be present at this very important meeting of our Association, I, therefore, write to give my reasons for objecting to the proposed Bye-Laws. In the first instance, I think that no Bye-Laws can be fairly and justly drawn up and considered whilst so much controversy is raging.

"It would, I think, be wiser under these circumstances if the Hon. Officers were to accept the gage thrown down and to clear themselves of the charges brought against them.

"As to the Bye-Laws themselves; if they were absolutely perfect in every other respect, yet the Clauses 28 and 29 would, I think, ruin the whole.

"To suggest that irregularities shall be made valid by force of numbers is, I feel, a little insulting to all honourable men and women.

"It is this method that has brought our Association to its present condition. No Association can work well, and no Bye-Laws are worth a moment's consideration unless *Right* is the ruling spirit, and not *Might*.

"These are the reasons why I ask all members, who have the real good of our Association at heart, to reject these proposed Bye-Laws.

"Believe me, Ladies and Gentlemen,  
"Yours truly,  
"MARY BURR."

#### COMING EVENTS.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I seem altogether outside the nursing area but take great interest in all that takes place in connection with nurses and their work. But I read with surprise of matrons writing and talking of their subordinate and insubordinate nurses. The woman or matron who uses such words in speaking of the nurses under her control must herself prove a tyrant, she being like them a paid servant of the institution she serves. Such words should be reserved for military and convict life; any right-minded woman (or nurse) might decline to work under such a (strong word) talker. Though all will not agree with Dr. J. Bell, yet we must own there is a spice of truth in some of his statements about the haughtiness and over-bearing of some of these upper nurses, or matrons—as we must call them. We have heard nurses tell of the unceasing petty tyranny of matrons, who, if a poor nurse offended against the rules (or matron) was run to earth.

From one who believes matrons have faults as well as nurses.

JANE PERREY.

[Hospital matrons will no doubt recognize the significance of the tone of this letter, taken in connection with the fact that at the instigation of the Hon. Officers the nurse members of the Royal British Nurses' Association on the 17th inst. voted to deprive the founder matrons of the Association of their *ex-officio* seats on the Executive Committee of the Association which they were offered and accepted ten years ago, and which fact is incorporated in our present Bye-Laws. We warned the matrons of the subversion of all discipline which must result in our nursing schools if the policy of Dr. Thorne was incorporated in the new Bye-Laws, as it has been, and it remains to be seen how the heads of our training schools will act now that they have been deprived of all real power in the Royal British Nurses' Association by the votes of a few medical members and their dependent nurses.—ED.]

DELICIOUS MAZAWATTEE TEA  
DELICIOUS MAZAWATTEE TEA  
DELICIOUS MAZAWATTEE TEA  
A Guarantee of Purity.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)