

working expenses, and I am sure the Committee will understand the gravity of the facts to which I have called attention. Finding myself, therefore, responsible for expenditure, which I hold to be unnecessary, over which I have no control, and which is so great that the funds of the Association cannot possibly meet it, I have no alternative but to decline to be held responsible any longer for the financial condition of the Corporation. It is no light matter, as the Committee will now understand, which makes me thus sever my connection with the Association. I have done my best, and worked my hardest in its service, and I can only hope that my successor will be able to restrict its expenses, or to increase its income, more successfully than I have been able to do.

"I beg, formally to move that the Committee take note of my impending resignation, and that this statement be entered upon the minutes of this Meeting.

"March 2, 1894."

Dr. THORNE demanded that the Executive Committee should institute an inquiry into these statements. This was seconded by Miss Grace Gordon, who said her "honour was involved," and supported by Miss De Pledge.

Mr. PEARCE GOULD moved an amendment to the effect that it was inexpedient to hold such an inquiry. He could not see that it would do any good, and he thought peace was wanted.

Dr. HERON seconded the amendment, and Drs. Calvert and Heywood Smith and Messrs. Gant and Fardon supported it, the last named on the ground that they were awaiting the decision of the Privy Council on the Bye-Laws, and dissensions were, therefore, very inadvisable.

Dr. FENWICK said he had intended to say a good deal on this matter, but as there was so strong a feeling against Dr. Thorne's action, he would only say that the statements made in his resignation were read four years ago to the Executive Committee in front of Dr. Thorne and Miss Grace Gordon, with facts and figures in front of him to prove every word in that statement. Dr. Thorne and Miss Gordon did not attempt to deny or to dispute one word then, and they had waited for four years before they ventured to do so.

The Council might draw its own conclusion as to that striking fact. At the same time he was anxious for an inquiry into the matter. The predictions he had made had been painfully fulfilled to the letter, and if the Committee of inquiry were appointed, he would undertake not only to substantiate every word he had said four years ago, but also to produce evidence which would startle the Committee.

After some further discussion, Mr. Pearce Gould's amendment was put to the meeting, and as only four persons—Dr. Thorne, Miss De Pledge, Miss Grace Gordon and Dr. Fenwick—voted against it it was declared carried.

Being put as a substantive motion, Dr. Fenwick alone voted against the Resolution that an inquiry was not expedient, and asked to have that fact recorded in the minutes.

Dr. Bezly Thorne then rose in a condition of extreme excitement, and loudly declared that he resigned his membership of the Royal British Nurses' Association. He had done so once before, but had been persuaded to withdraw it, and he now insisted on its being accepted. An amusing scene followed this declaration.

Miss DE PLEDGE implored Dr. Bezly Thorne not

to leave them, and predicted disasters all round if he did. Other members explained the effect of the amendment to him, and he so far relented as to say that if the Council would pledge itself to hold the inquiry as soon as the Privy Council had given its decision on the Bye-Laws, he would be mollified. The Chairman, however, pointed out that the meeting could not pledge future meetings, and Dr. Bezly Thorne thereupon hurriedly left the Hall. Dr. Bedford Fenwick commended the proceedings as a valuable object lesson to the members, and the meeting, as usual, broke up in some disorder.

Legal Matters.

At Burslem County Court, before Judge Jordan, Margaret Rogers, formerly a nurse at Chell Workhouse, sued the Wolstanton and Burslem Board of Guardians for £14 7s. 6d., claimed as pension under the Poor Law Officers' Superannuation Act, 1896, from March 17th to September 17th, 1897.

The case for the nurse was that she was appointed nurse at Chell Workhouse in March, 1895. At that time she gave her age as forty-four, but told the Guardians that she did not know her correct age, and might be a little older. After the passing of the Superannuation Act she stated in the form, which the Local Government Board required to be filled up, that she was about sixty-three, and had held nine appointments dating from 1873. Upon this the Guardians called upon Nurse Rogers to contract out of the Act, and, upon her refusing to do so, gave her a month's notice.

For the defence it was stated that the Local Government Board, after much hesitation, approved of the Plaintiff's appointment, believing her age to be forty-four. Had they known her age to be over sixty neither they nor the Guardians would have sanctioned the appointment.

The Judge said there was no doubt that the nurse had made a deliberate false statement for the purpose of obtaining the appointment. He thought the Guardians could have defended the action on the ground that the Plaintiff had obtained the post by fraudulent misrepresentation. They had, however, given the nurse a legal notice terminating her appointment, and he held that she had not satisfied him that she was sixty-five when she left the service of the Guardians, the age at which she would be qualified for a pension. He, therefore, gave judgment for the Defendants.

Members of the nursing profession will receive this judgment with satisfaction. That a woman should descend to making a deliberate false statement in order to obtain a nursing appointment, and should afterwards unblushingly add eighteen years to her age, with the object of obtaining a pension, and sue the Guardians in order to obtain it, affords food for reflection for nurses, and once more points the moral of the necessity which exists for the organization of the nursing profession.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)