

the Association, and to remove all independent and representative medical men and inatrons from the executive governing body. Specifically, Bye-Law XX. provides for a new Executive Committee without one special general practitioner representative, and excluding the Presidents of the British Medical Association and the Medical Practitioners' Association, from the *ex-officio* seats promised to them—leaving a Committee composed only of unrepresentative and unofficial medical men and nurses who are made eligible for perpetual re-election and would, it is submitted, be merely the nominees of the said officials.

9. Your Petitioners submit that if the said new Bye-Laws be sanctioned by your Lordships, the said officials would be given complete and undisputed authority and control over the Association, and that this would result in the gravest injury to the Association, to the medical profession, to nurses, and, indirectly also, to the public. Your Petitioners, therefore, pray that your Lordships will be pleased to withhold your sanction to the said Bye-Laws until an opportunity has been granted to your Petitioners to prove the statements above made, and the harmful effects of the present management of the Association, and of the proposed new Bye-Laws, if carried into effect.

And your Petitioners will ever pray, etc.

SIGNED BY ORDER, AND ON BEHALF,
OF THE CENTRAL COUNCIL OF
THE INCORPORATED MEDICAL
PRACTITIONERS' ASSOCIATION.

December 17th, 1897.

HUGH WOODS, *President.*
BEDFORD FENWICK, M.D.,
Chairman of the Central Council.
FRANK GREAVES, *Senior Hon. Secretary.*

Legal Matters.

ACTION FOR BREACH OF PROMISE.

WE regret again to record a matter reported in the daily press and discreditable to the nursing profession. We do so in order to emphasize the necessity which exists for legal registration, both for the protection of the public, and for the good name of trained nurses. Medical men protect themselves by removing from their Register those who have proved themselves unworthy to remain upon it, and repudiate responsibility for the misdemeanours of such persons. Trained nurses on the contrary are blamed for the wrong doing of those from whom they have no means of disassociating themselves. The daily papers lightly describe persons as "trained nurses"—a heading to a scandal which involves a trained nurse "catching on" with the public. At the same time no evidence of the training is produced, and no mention is made of the institutions in which they were trained.

Trained nurses will ask, who is Miss Ethel Prudens Coughlan who, since 1890, has received in hard cash from Mr. Reginald Gridley, residing at Queen's Gate, Kensington, £7000 as remuneration for her relations with him, and presumably also for the support of the child which was the result of these relations?

It was stated in evidence that the defendant proposed marriage to the plaintiff in 1890, but, as his friends made objections to the match he paid her £1000, and in 1892 the plaintiff resolved to go to Australia as a nurse.

At each port she received cablegrams begging her to return, and when she arrived at Melbourne she did so by the next boat.

Mr. Justice Hawkins said "it seemed to him that the defendant had behaved very kindly, and it was rather a heartless thing on the part of the plaintiff to go to Australia in the way she did." This appears to us a most remarkable judicial utterance. Is it the general opinion of the Bench that £7000 condones the greatest injury a man can do a woman?

The jury gave a verdict for the defendant, for whom judgment was entered, with costs.

We desire to know what Mr. Fardon, and those who with him have repudiated the necessity of legal registration of nurses, and have rendered the existence of the Royal British Nurses' Association futile by disavowing the object for which it was formed, intend to do to protect the nursing profession from persons of the type of the plaintiff in this case. Since 1890 (if she has ever been a nurse at all) she can scarcely have been actively engaged in nursing duties, her occupation having been, apparently, a more remunerative, if a less honourable, one than that of nursing; but the nursing profession has, nevertheless, to bear the onus of the scandal. Those who deny trained nurses the right to legal registration are largely responsible for this injury to an honourable profession. What shall be said of the nurses themselves who, from jealousy and other unworthy motives, have betrayed the interests of their profession, with which they are entrusted? The saddest phase of the whole question is the attitude of nurses themselves with regard to the subject of registration. We find self-interest, expediency, and servility predominating where we have a right to look for a sense of professional responsibility and disinterestedness. What wonder that those who are actuated by these motives are ready tools in the hands of the unscrupulous?

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)