

governing body of the Association, and provision was made in the Bye-laws that a large proportion of the members, both of the General Council and of the Executive Committee, should be medical men. From that day, doctors, have had, and have exercised, a largely controlling voice in the management of the Association, and we are expressing the views which are held by the Nurse members, perhaps without exception, that the greatest gratitude is felt towards the medical profession as a body, for the kind attention and care which some of its leaders have bestowed upon the interests of the Association. We have no hesitation in saying that their advice and assistance have been invaluable, and that the Nurses realise and are grateful for their help.

It is therefore, with the most profound regret, that we learn that efforts are being made to pretend that there is a division of opinion between the Nurse members of the Association and the medical members as a body. This statement, there is every reason to believe, is not only destitute of truth, but has been raised in accordance with the well-known stratagem of "drawing a red herring across the track"—that is to say, in the hope of diverting attention from crucial facts which are at present in dispute. Those who have invented this *canard* have been engaged in an attempt to sow dissension amongst the Nurses, for their own purposes, and having failed therein, and having committed themselves to a policy which is certain to bring down upon them not only professional but public discredit, they are attempting to confuse the issues by raising extraneous questions, such as that to which we have alluded. We find it advisable to give this explanation, because it appears that the misstatement in question has been widely spread abroad. We avail ourselves of this opportunity to acknowledge with much gratitude the kind letters which we have received from our readers in London and the provinces, concerning the statements made in our Editorial of June 1st. We are glad to learn that such wide-spread disapproval of the proceedings which we described is felt by medical men as well as Nurses. We are glad to hear that so many members, even at considerable inconvenience, propose to attend the Annual Meeting of the Corporation, and to publicly express their opinion upon these proceedings, and we can assure them that their assistance at this crisis will be greatly valued. We have not been surprised at the universal outburst of indignation which the proposal has aroused that the Association should, now that it has obtained all it can from the Training Schools, break through the definite agreement and promise which it made, to give their Matrons *ex-officio* seats upon the governing and active bodies of

the Association. But the personal question, as usual, has aroused even greater interest and indignation, and many correspondents have expressed to us their disapproval of the attempt to force off from the Association those women who founded it, who for seven years have been its most active workers, and by whose efforts it has chiefly attained its present success.

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#### UNTRAINED NURSES.

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A CASE of the greatest importance was tried in the Southport County Court last week. A young woman sued the executrix of her late aunt for nursing fees amounting to £28. Her case was, that in September, 1891, while she was a confectioner's assistant at Llandudno, she was summoned to attend upon and nurse her aunt, who was a confirmed invalid. The plaintiff therefore immediately gave up her situation, and on undertaking her new duties was given to understand that she would be paid by her aunt "the ordinary nursing fee of a guinea a week." She nursed her aunt for twenty-eight weeks, and never received any payment for her services; and what appears to have hurt her feelings even more, her name was not mentioned in her aunt's will. In her evidence, the plaintiff declared that she had had various conversations with her aunt on the subject of these fees, but that she had not pressed for payment as her relative was "in difficulties." It was argued for the defence that no definite contract had been proved, but the jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff for the full amount claimed, and costs. Now it may be argued that the aunt, knowing that the niece was a confectioner, had every right to employ her as an attendant, and at any rate, was not only well aware of the nursing qualifications of her niece, but also had an indisputable right, if she chose to do so, to pay for those services at the ordinary rate of a trained nurse's remuneration. The importance of the case, to our minds, is that the court came to the conclusion that although there was no contract in this case, a confectioner's assistant was entitled to receive payment for her untrained services at precisely the same rate as though she were a trained nurse. In other words, an important precedent has been established for persons who are entirely ignorant of Nursing, and who yet claim to be paid for Nursing services as though these were given by a skilled worker. The question of family relationship clearly does not enter into the consideration of this matter, because not only did the aunt neglect to pay for the services rendered to her, but even in her will she omitted to give any tangible evidence of her regard for, and her gratitude to, her niece. This case, therefore, carries the important lesson to Nurses, that unlike the members of other organised callings, they are still, in the eye of the law, recognised as only on an equality with any utterly unskilled worker, so far as the legal value of their services is concerned, and that, therefore, so far as remuneration for those services can be claimed, any untrained person has an equal right with themselves to demand, to sue for, and from a Court of Law to receive, precisely the same fees as those to which the best trained Nurses are by custom entitled.

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