

that truth and justice shall prevail in its midst. If a Nurse is threatened with removal from the Register—with professional ruin—whatever one or two of her colleagues in this room may think, I hold that that Nurse is entitled to defend herself (applause), and I should be sorry for the Nurse who is attacked like Miss Barlow has been, and who has upon her conscience the knowledge that she voted against a colleague who defended herself successfully in a Court of Law. (Applause.) I say, Sir, that the matter is now one for this Corporation; but, outside it, there is a higher power than this Corporation, because this is a matter which touches the rights of every British citizen. (Applause.) Have we no right to express our views? Are not we entitled in this country to free rights of speech? If we consider ourselves deprived of a simple right and privilege, have we no right to say so? The thing is past all argument, Sir. Of course we have. This Resolution, Sir, if it is passed, is not worth the paper it is written on. It says definitely that the Nurse was disloyal to express her views. You cannot prevent one single member of this Association from expressing her views, however many resolutions you pass. (Applause.) I do not believe, Sir, that any meeting such as this, of Englishmen and Englishwomen, will permit this Resolution to be passed; but, if it is passed, I say it is not worth the paper it is written upon. Miss Barlow sits on velvet. She has won her case. She has protected herself. She has been successful—or you may use what term you like. She has obtained her costs in a Court of Law, and if the meeting attempts to set itself up as a Court of Appeal from decisions given in the High Court of Chancery, then I can only say that this meeting will cover itself with ridicule. (Loud applause.) There is only one other point to which I must call attention, and that is this: Miss Barlow's action was taken against Dr. W. Bezly Thorne, Dr. James Calvert, Mrs. Dacre Craven, and others, including the members of the Executive Committee. Miss Barlow took her action to protect herself against those who threatened her. The Resolution states that the action was taken against the Association. On the very face of it, therefore, the Resolution is untrue. The Corporation has never threatened her. I do not believe her fellow Nurses would have threatened her. ("Never.") Every one of them is implicated in this case; what happened to her might have happened to them; and they themselves have to give the judgment to-day, whether her conduct in protecting herself was disloyal. They have to give a much more serious judgment. They are asked to traverse the decision of a Court of Law, and to say that the decision which was given in the Court of Chancery, practically in favour of Miss Barlow, was given in support of an unjustifiable action. (Loud and continued applause.)

The CHAIRMAN: You have not moved a motion?

Dr. BEDFORD FENWICK: I have been speaking to the Resolution.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you move the previous question?

Dr. BEDFORD FENWICK: Not at all; I have been speaking to the Resolution.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you support it?

Dr. BEDFORD FENWICK: No; I condemn it root and branch! (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN: Will not you give it some practical form?

A MEMBER: Surely, sir, one can speak to a Resolution which has been proposed and seconded?

The CHAIRMAN: If the Resolution is not opposed, what is the object in speaking about it? It is either an amendment, or you move that the Resolution be rejected.

Dr. HUGH WOODS: I am about to move an amendment. I wish to move an amendment to the Resolution—"That this Association declines to deter its members from using their private judgment as to the propriety or otherwise of publicly criticising the management of the Association in a legitimate way, and further declines to use its influence to prevent its members from exercising their legal right of applying to Her Majesty's Courts of Justice when they think fit to do so." (Applause.) I shall not, for a moment, attempt to enter into the details of this case of Miss Barlow. I think we have heard a great deal more of it than ever we wished for. (Applause.) I must say it seems to me a beautiful exemplification of the tremendous extent to which a storm in a tea-cup can go! There has been a fearful amount of fuss and trouble over it. Then the question remains here (the subject is still before us), how is it to end? One side says the other side is to blame, and the other says the one is to blame. I think very likely that there may have been some faults on both sides; but I certainly do say the Executive has acted in what I should say was a distinctly high-handed way in the matter. (Hear, hear.) The thing which seems to be generally agreed to have started the whole thing was a letter written by Miss Barlow. I do not wish to defend every word in that letter, or every part of it, or the writing of it at all, but, if that sort of thing is to be condemned in such a tremendous manner, I must say I hope it will not come to be the same in the medical profession. (Cries of "Hear, hear.") There are doctors present on the platform who are well aware that I have said—and publicly said—ininitely and enormously infinitely worse things about the General Medical Council (laughter), and this conduct simply shocks me in an Association which does not even keep a legal Register, and in which, of course, the harm of being struck off is not quite so great, but, even in this Association, it is establishing a horrible precedent. Whenever a Nurse criticises the action of the Executive—the present Executive may be the best that ever existed, but the day may come when it may not be so—are we to establish a precedent that any person who ventures to write a letter to a public paper, saying that the Executive is not acting properly, is to get a lawyer's letter? We know that many a young woman is frightened to death at getting a lawyer's letter; she thinks at once that the next thing will be that a policeman will come and take her to jail. (Laughter.) I think the action of the Executive amounted to intimidating the Nurse; and I think in that she has a serious ground of complaint. Whether she might not have got someone to intervene in the matter I am not in a position to judge about. I think if either the Executive, or the Nurse, had taken steps to get the matter peaceably settled, they would have had the whole Association with them. So far as the Nurse is blamed, I think she is probably blamed for being a little high-handed in reply. When people get stroked the wrong way, they get ruffled. She knew she could go successfully to the Court and defend herself, and she did. For my part, I can hardly blame her. I move, sir, an amendment, although I should be very

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