

strongly enough expressed. The only point I cannot understand is why people should inspire a Nurse to do such things. I would ask, Mr. President, from whence did that Nurse derive her inspiration. (Hear, hear.) She was a Nurse who had been but a few hours a member of this Association.

Dr. BEDFORD FENWICK: Days!

Dr. OUTTERSON WOOD: Days are but hours!

Dr. BEDFORD FENWICK: Hours are not days. (Laughter.)

Dr. OUTTERSON WOOD: And she happened to be a Nurse who was working in a private nursing establishment belonging to the Editor of the NURSING RECORD, whose husband we have had the gratification and pleasure of hearing on so many and so numerous occasions at the Council meetings of the Association. Mr. President, if I could say anything in conclusion, probably it would be that if we can by any possible means adopt the admirable amendment of Dr. Norman Kerr this Association will do justice to itself.

Mr. BRUDENELL CARTER: Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,—The course which events at this meeting have taken, and appear likely to take, renders it, I think, quite unnecessary that I should attempt to address you at any length, but there are one or two small matters in connection with this legal business which have been either inaccurately represented, or in some way slurred over, and which I should like to put in a somewhat clearer light than that in which I think they stand at present. In the first place, Dr. Bedford Fenwick told us that it was an obvious mistake this letter in the NURSING RECORD being dated on the 8th June—I think that was the month—when the Nurse had only that morning received her notice of election. But those ladies here who may reside in London, or who know that precise neighbourhood, will, perhaps, welcome the information that Holles Street, in which Miss Barlow was employed, is not more than two minutes' walk from the offices of the Association, so that there was ample time for Miss Barlow, after receiving her notice of election, to do what she said she had done, and to go round to the office and ask for her voting paper, and to go back and write her letter to the NURSING RECORD.

Dr. BEDFORD FENWICK: Did she do so?

Mr. BRUDENELL CARTER: I presume she did, because it was dated the 8th.

Dr. BEDFORD FENWICK: There is a sworn affidavit from your Secretary that she did not.

Mr. BRUDENELL CARTER: There was a statement—a communication appeared in the next week's number of the NURSING RECORD, saying that by some error—a printer's error—printers are very careless people!—in a communication—there was nothing to show what communication—the date of the 8th had been put instead of the date of the 12th. Before that correction, which, as I say, had nothing to connect it with Miss Barlow's letter—this letter under the date of the 8th was brought under the notice of the Executive Committee, of which, at that time, I was a member, although I ceased to be so at the date of the annual meeting. We had that letter before us—we had not the printer before us. (Laughter.) We had no opportunity of investigating his mistakes, and we were obliged to take the facts as they were presented to us. Then, again, a speaker—Dr. Woods, I think, was the gentleman's name—has said that we strike at the root of

the right of a Nurse to make complaints, or to seek protection in a Court of Law, and that it was absurd for her to apply to the Executive Committee, because the Executive Committee were the persons of whom she complained. (Hear, hear.) Sir, the Executive Committee were not the persons of whom she complained; she complained of the management of the office; she complained of the Secretary; she complained of the clerks. (No!) It was not the business of the Executive Committee to send out voting papers. And what happened when this good lady did call at the office? There she was told by the Secretary that the voting papers had been sent out some time ago, that it had not been the custom to issue voting papers to new members after the bulk of them had been sent out, and that she would enquire and ask authority to send her one, but she did not feel authorised to give her one on her own authority. The next day the authority was received and the paper was sent, and the whole contention and the whole trouble fell to the ground. Now, sir, in the course of his eloquent remarks, Dr. Bedford Fenwick made one admission, the full force of which I think he did not appreciate. He told us, I think, that it was within his knowledge, within Miss Barlow's knowledge, and within the knowledge of the solicitors, that the meeting that was to be called for, I think, the 26th of June was not a special meeting, but an ordinary meeting of the Executive Committee.

Dr. BEDFORD FENWICK: I never said so. ("No.")

Mr. BRUDENELL CARTER: Dr. Fenwick and the solicitors, and Miss Barlow, and anybody who had access to the Charter and Bye-laws, knew that no meeting could be called at which it was possible for the Executive Committee to proceed to erase a Nurse's name from the Register; there was absolutely no risk or peril of anything of the kind being done.

Dr. BEDFORD FENWICK: Then why did not they say so?

Mr. BRUDENELL CARTER: There was absolutely no occasion for this legal proceeding.

Dr. BEDFORD FENWICK: The Judge held that there was.

Mr. BRUDENELL CARTER: And the legal proceedings and the expenses to which the Association was put by them, were expenses caused by conduct which was in defiance of the first duty of every member of the Corporation, to protect its interests. There was no danger, nobody could have believed there was any danger, nobody was in the least degree imposed upon, and the whole business was what, if I was still a schoolboy, I should be inclined to call a "plant."

Mrs. BEDFORD FENWICK: Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen,—We have been called here to-day to pass a resolution sent out as a pre-judgment of the case of Miss Barlow. Now from all the speeches that have been made, this meeting has been led to believe that we begin, in July, 1895, on the case of Miss Barlow. We are asked to assume that all this feeling in the Association has sprung up like a mushroom in a night, and that it has no root and no reason. Now, as one of the two ladies in the room—or perhaps there are three—who inaugurated the Royal British—or, rather the British Nurses' Association—and as one who has for eight years seldom missed a meeting either of the Council, the Executive Committee, or its Sub-Committees, I should like to be able to place before this meeting the reason why probably all this dissension has arisen. The facts are these. This

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)