

independence, and from the subscriptions of its members the Association not only defrayed its working expenses, but accumulated a reserve fund. Thirdly, the members claim the right of free speech, which is their birth-right as British citizens; and finally, they demand that within their Corporation truth and justice shall always, in future, prevail. Let us briefly consider these several points, and show how the necessity for such self-justifying demands has arisen.

The Charter and Bye-laws give members the right to requisition Special General Meetings, and to propose such alterations in the Bye-laws as shall seem advisable. The Association, when first formed, promised the Matrons of the large Training Schools permanent seats upon its General Council. Owing to a mistake in the new Bye-laws, drafted in 1893, it appeared that these ladies ought to retire, like others, in rotation. But the members demanded a Special General Meeting in order to alter the Bye-law. That right was illegally denied them in March, 1895; they were prevented by the Executive Committee from holding the meeting, and altering the Bye-law, as they desired; and thus the hon. officers succeeded in compelling the Association to break its pledge, and to turn the founders of the Association off its governing body. The Royal Charter makes the General Council not only the governing body, but the last Court of Appeal in the Association. The officials have kept back from the knowledge of the Council, matters of the greatest consequence to the Corporation; and, even when due notice had been given of a Resolution to bring one such matter before the Council, the officials burked the discussion, and prevented the subject from being considered by the Council at all. The Council, in short, has been ignored and over-ridden by the officials.

Going a step further, we find that the Executive Committee in its turn is ignored and over-ridden by these same persons. Matters of the greatest importance have been kept from the knowledge of the Executive which, under the Charter and Bye-laws, is responsible for the management of such affairs. To take only the last example of this; it was shewn at the Annual Meeting last month, that the Annual Report which the Charter ordains should be prepared by the Executive Committee had never been seen by that body; the medical Hon. Secretary con-

temptuously ignoring its existence and its duties, and preparing and presenting to the meeting a Report of his own, which was entirely unauthorised. Yet the Chairman at the meeting absolutely upheld the action of his fellow-official, and ruled that the Corporation could accept a report which the Executive Committee had not seen nor sanctioned, in place of the document which the Royal Charter requires that the Executive shall each year prepare.

The manner in which the expenses of the Corporation have been allowed to enormously outrun its income was painfully proved by the audited accounts, which showed that the Association, at the end of April, was some £300 in debt, and that it had, during the preceding year, spent at least £700 beyond its reliable income.

The manner in which discussion is burked, and free speech prevented, at the meetings is plainly shown by the instances to which we have already alluded, and by the report of the last meeting, which appears in another column.

Finally, the historical case of Miss Barlow proves that no Nurse is safe from attempted tyranny. That lady made a simple complaint in this journal of having been deprived of a legal right—to wit, her voting paper. The Committee thereupon passed a most unjust resolution—in one sentence asking her for an explanation and demanding an apology. But the officials, as usual, ignored the Committee; did not acquaint the Nurse, as they were directed to do, with the terms of that resolution; but informed her that the Committee had determined to proceed against her for the removal of her name from the Register—in other words, to ruin her professionally for having dared to complain of the official mismanagement—a statement which was unauthorised and untrue. But she, not knowing their ways, appealed to the Courts of Justice for protection, and those who had attempted to intimidate her then pleaded that they had never meant anything by their threat. The Judge evidently considered that, in that case, they ought not to have threatened her, and awarded her her costs.

A Notice of Motion was sent in to the Secretary in writing three weeks previously to this Annual Meeting, and by registered letter. The acting secretary of the Association, Miss E. G. E. Guiseppe, signed the Post Office receipt for the registered letter. But the Chairman at

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