

Editorial.

THE ROYAL BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

THE Annual Meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association was held on Wednesday, the 22nd inst., in the Great Hall at St. Bartholomew's Hospital. It was marked from its commencement to its end by the utmost irregularity and supreme injustice; and it was a most significant fact that while there was a large gathering of Nurses from the Middlesex Hospital and the Chelsea Workhouse Infirmary, there were comparatively few Nurses or Sisters from St. Bartholomew's or other large Hospitals, still fewer Hospital Matrons, and the leading medical members of the Association—the gentlemen to whose influence and position the Association owed so much in the past—were conspicuous by their absence; affording thereby excellent proof of the fact that the small clique, which at present controls the affairs of the Association, does not possess either the sympathy or the support of their professional brethren.

The Chairman, Sir James Crichton Browne, once more proved himself to be the type of all that a Chairman should not be; constantly interrupting the speakers, and, once more, so far forgetting himself as to make extraordinary personal remarks for which he was, once again, called to order. The fact that one of the members had to threaten to move a vote of want of confidence in the Chairman for his conduct in the Chair was an occurrence which is perhaps almost unprecedented; but unfortunately this is by no means the first occasion upon which Sir James Crichton Browne has aroused the indignation of those who are accustomed to find an English Chairman always fair and just.

Two significant facts upon which we must comment are that the Chairman first ruled that a provision of the Charter was not binding upon the Executive Committee, and secondly, that he strained the letter of a comparatively unimportant Bye-Law to the utmost in order to shield himself and his friends from censure—an excellent example of straining at a gnat after swallowing an entire camel.

The Charter provides specially that "the Executive Committee shall once in every year at least prepare a general report of their proceedings for the year preceding and attach

thereto a duly certified statement of accounts and of the finances of the Corporation," and that it is the Annual Meeting which shall receive the "annual and financial reports for the past year." At the Meeting, it was proved that the Executive Committee had not been asked to fulfil the duty thus imposed upon it, and that, instead, Mr. Edward Fardon, the Medical Hon. Secretary, had, without any authority from the Executive Committee, and without its knowledge, taken upon himself to perform this duty; so that the Annual Report which was read emanated, therefore, from him alone. The gravity and significance of this example of the manner in which the Executive Committee is contemptuously ignored by its officials is only equalled by the presumption of the Medical Hon. Secretary, in adopting such an attitude. The Chairman stated that Mr. Fardon's predecessor, Dr. Bezly Thorne, had equally ignored the Charter and the Executive Committee, by preparing the Annual Report without reference to the Committee; and that, therefore, Mr. Fardon was justified in his proceeding. This is the old argument that two wrongs make one right, a statement which has never been accepted as either veracious or even justifiable. We venture to believe that Sir James Crichton Browne was distinctly wrong in his law, and more than wrong in his deduction. Still the Report from Mr. Fardon, which was not authorised, was adopted by the Meeting, and the Report from the Executive Committee required under the Royal Charter was never produced at all. A formal protest was entered against the proceeding, and it undoubtedly presents one more proof of the manner in which the present officials have rendered the provisions of the Charter null and void.

The Chairman, however, took the opposite course when the Vote of Censure to be proposed upon the Executive Committee was reached. The Bye-Laws provide that every Resolution to be proposed at a General Meeting of the Corporation must have been sent "in writing by registered letter to the Secretary at least three weeks previously for insertion upon the Agenda of the said meeting." It was not disputed that Miss Breay had sent her Resolution, in writing, to the Secretary, in proper time. The Resolution was actually set forth upon the Agenda of the meeting; and its receipt, we are informed, was duly acknowledged by the Secretary to Miss Breay. But the officials stated that the communication in question had

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