

tion" into the body, and carried matters with an exceedingly high hand. No one's statement was a clearer indictment of the management than that of Miss Lee, who came over from Ireland specially to attend the meeting, and to make her candid and spirited protest. Miss Lee is head of the Ear and Eye Infirmary in Molesworth Street, and represented the opinion of many, if not all, Irish matrons. One member of the Council had spoken of the opinions of his opponents as "infamous and blackguardly," and Miss Lee remarked that gentlewomen were not used to such language. It was supposed to be "our Association, managed for our benefit," she remarked, yet the nurses had been ousted from the management. The delegates who voted against the registration of qualified nurses had been upheld by the officials, yet the money to start the Association had been got for the very purpose of having a body of properly registered nurses. The office expenses were far too great. Formerly the body had paid its way, and all self-respecting women objected to being dependent on the money raised by the means now employed to keep things going; and much to the same purpose. It was characteristic of the methods of the majority that one of them got up and alluded to the very temperate and clearly-proved charges made by Miss Lee as 'another Irish obstruction.' Dr. and Mrs. Bedford Fenwick and Dr. Hugh Woods (formerly on the Council, but relegated to the ranks of a simple member since he ventured to question the fairness of that body) all kept peppering away at the management, and from their statements, never disproved, there can I think be little doubt but that the present Council has alienated a great number of nurses, has brought the Association into discredit, and that it is no longer a self-supporting body, or composed of properly trained and registered nurses. That the Council were re-elected by a large majority, is in my estimation no proof whatever that they are deserving of confidence. So long as the doctors have the power of dictating how the Association is to go on, so long will numbers of nurses back them up, when to put themselves in opposition to such powerful personages would be vastly against their own interests. Besides, we must remember that the Association now has in its ranks many who were at first its opponents, and who have only joined since its success became an established fact. It would be interesting to know—could such statistics be obtained—how many of the earnest women who first made a stand against the sweating and overworking of hospital nurses are included in the majority that keep the present Council on."

The *Lady's Pictorial* says:—

"There is a very undignified squabble going on in the Royal British Nurses' Association, and one which is likely to have a serious ending. Accusations have been made against the management by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick which demand an immediate public inquiry. At any rate, it appears advisable that an association which is composed of working women should have a majority of women on its Committee of Management, and that a more complete and satisfactory answer to the grave charges than that of Mr. Fardon's, the Hon. Medical Secretary, should be made.

The proceedings at the annual meeting of the Association on Friday, the 22nd ult., under the

presidency of Sir James Crichton Browne, gave opportunity for much discussion, which to an outsider pointed that there certainly appears to be room for a readjustment as regards the management of the Association, which owes its foundation, to a very great extent, to Mrs. Bedford Fenwick. It appears as if, so far as nurses are concerned, there is great need of reorganisation all round."

*Woman* also has a word to say on the subject, and draws attention to the extraordinary decrease in membership during the past three years.

"The meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association at the Imperial Institute seems to have been unproductive of good. Each faction was equally determined, and there was no effort whatever towards compromise or pacification. Mrs. Bedford Fenwick's indictment of the management was distinctly impressive, but the latter part of the meeting lacked all dignity. To my mind, the great central fact is that, since the present Committee had charge of it, the Association has steadily decreased in numbers. How does the Committee explain this?"

#### A REIGN OF TERROR.

To prove the dependence of nurse members, and how they fear to act according to the convictions of their conscience, the following quotations from letters before us will testify:—"You will think it very mean-spirited of me not to have come up and supported the right at the annual meeting, but you know how dependent I am (this lady has a private hospital); if I am seen voting against the powers that be, I shall be spotted from the platform, and you know what that means. I fear I have lost some "patrons" as it is, by refusing to come and vote on the other side, but that I will never do. The truth is, unless the public rouse themselves on the present disgraceful state of the Royal British Nurses' Association, and give us nurses some protection, we shall all have to drop it, as many have done already; *it is not safe as it is.*"

Again, a matron of a London hospital writes:—"I have read about the Royal British Nurses' Association meeting. I was going to write that my duties kept me at home, but, to be honest, they didn't. The truth is, I have had a hint that I must take no part in this fight. Although our men do not belong to the British Nurses' Association, they consider it might injure the hospital if it was mentioned in the papers. But you know, having been on the Executive, how I sympathise with you."

A matron of a county hospital writes:—"Nothing will induce me to attend any more meetings of the Association until the present régime is abolished. That the matrons of lead-

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