

oppose, and on principle will continue to oppose, his reactionary tactics.

I am, Dear Madam,  
Yours faithfully,  
A MALCONTENT.

[The conduct of business at the annual meeting amply proved our contention that all influence and control of the business of the Royal British Nurses' Association has been gradually monopolised by the medical members. Naturally, it should be the duty of the nurses to control their own affairs, but regulations have been drafted deputing much of this power into the hands of the men. One regulation, however, states, "The office work shall be under the supervision of the Nurse Hon. Secretary," but it is notorious that of late Mr. Fardon, the Medical Secretary, has assumed practical control of our affairs, conducting the meetings, and sending replies to correspondents. As observed by the representatives of the Press present at the annual meeting, the nurses have been "ousted" by the medical officers from all authority in their own Association.—ED.]

#### THE ROYAL BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION.

*To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."*

MADAM,—Your correspondence which you published last week, will doubtless have convinced your readers, that the matrons and nurses who object to the present management of the Royal British Nurses' Association have just cause for complaint; and as a late member of the General Council I am glad of the opportunity of corroborating the statements made in the Matrons' Protest.

The conduct of business at the General Council meetings during the past three years has been most unjust, and disgraceful; and on the two last occasions absolutely illegal. The whole system is riddled with jobbery, and the part taken by the officials of the Middlesex Hospital is most reprehensible.

I observe in the interview which was published in *London* with the present Hon. Medical Secretary, Mr. Fardon (Middlesex Hospital), that in reply to the question:—"Now, about the charge that medical men are seeking to run the Association?" Mr. Fardon replies, "Preposterous! what object could they have? Doctors only have the interest of the public at heart in promoting a good standard of nursing."

It may interest the public to know that at the Middlesex Hospital, a most rudimentary theoretical education is given to the nurses, and that they are certificated without any examination to test their knowledge—that the snobbish system of Lady Pupils is still in vogue, where by paying a guinea a week a "lady" may be exempted from a thorough training, and eat and sleep more luxuriously, and have more time off duty, than those unfortunate probationers "who have to work for their living"—and that certificates are granted to these Lady Pupils, who presumably are quite at liberty after passing through their inefficient curriculum of training in the wards of the Middlesex Hospital, to go out and compete in the open market with the thoroughly qualified, and certificated nurses of other institutions.

How can Mr. Fardon reconcile this system with his

statement, "he has only the interest of the public at heart." Can Mr. Fardon consider such an obsolete system "a good standard of nursing"? The truth is, that the training, and many of the rules and regulations at the Middlesex Hospital, require thorough overhauling by the Committee; and the "system of nursing" should be brought up to a modern standard.

And again, Mr. Fardon states, "The medical men have contributed to the funds of the Association much more than the nurses, in their anxiety to raise the nursing profession." This is not true, as the accounts will show, but we consider the yearly subscriptions of those medical men who expend large sums of money—as we nurses think, in show and extravagance—are calculated to pauperise and therefore *lower*, rather than *raise* the nursing profession. No association of women can maintain its independence and self-respect, which places itself in the false position of financial dependence upon the employers of its members, and this is one of the abuses of which we bitterly complain, that without our consent we should be held up *in formâ pauperis* to the general public, and made the objects of patronage by medical men and their families, who desire through the influence of our Association, to hobnob with Royalty.

Lastly, Mr. Fardon says, "But what on earth have the medical men to gain by it? Surely it is not supposed that they gain professionally!" Certainly not, because medical men of high standing in the profession have stood aloof from our Association ever since the present system of management was inaugurated. Take for instance our annual meeting; for the first six years, according to a distinct promise given to provincial members, the annual meeting was held in a provincial town, and we were received either by the Mayor or other leading citizens.

In 1889 we held our meeting in the Guildhall at Cambridge; in 1890 we were hospitably entertained at Birmingham; in 1891 at Lincoln; in 1892 we met in the Pavilion at Brighton; in 1893 we held our meeting in the Hall of Balliol College, Oxford, and lunched at Magdalen; in 1894 we met in the Town Hall, Windsor, and were publicly entertained by the Mayor. But these were in the good old days! For the last three years, upon the recommendation of the Hon. Officials, we have been compelled to hold our annual meeting in London, *where the voting could be relied upon*, and have of course received no public and official recognition as a Chartered body. You will observe from last year's report, and this year's notice of our general meeting, that a semi-private tea party was given by the Treasurer and Mrs. Langton, in Harley Street, and our Royal President attended, and what is the result? All, and sundry of the Treasurer's patients and his medical friends and their families were invited to meet Royalty, *through the influence of the Nurses' Association!*

What happened at our annual conversazione in December? Was our Royal President welcomed on the platform by one leading matron or distinguished nurse? Not at all, the only two ladies on the platform were Mrs. and Miss Langton, the latter presenting a bouquet to the Princess. Is it too much to ask what official connection these ladies hold in the nursing world that they should perform a pleasing duty, representative of the nursing profession?

If these medical men do not gain professionally by their connection with the Nurses' Association, they,

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)