

certainly seem to demand an inquiry into their truth. . . . Those who affect to treat nurses with derision, under the idea that they are merely latter-day modifications of Mrs. Gamp, are not likely to find themselves very extensively supported." Again, the *Lady's Pictorial* says—"The Royal British Nurses' Association owes its existence undoubtedly to Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, and a few of her friends, and it is sincerely to be trusted that she will, throughout the length and breadth of the nursing and women's world, have generous assistance accorded her, and her supporters, in setting right the most unsatisfactory state of affairs which at present exists in the Royal British Nurses' Association."

With sentiments such as these being published on all sides, can anyone doubt that a public inquiry will eventually be held. The sooner the better for all concerned.

In conclusion, as I am unable to write individually to the hundreds of members of the Royal British Nurses' Association, matrons, sisters, and nurses, from all parts of the British Isles, who have responded to the invitation of the Members' Rights Defence Committee to sign a petition to the Privy Council, asking for a public inquiry into the management of the Royal British Nurses' Association, I would take this opportunity to thank them. The Members' Rights Defence Committee has every reason to be gratified at the result of its appeal, and I do not doubt that a petition from members of the Association, so largely and influentially signed, will have the greatest weight with the Privy Council.

I am, dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

MARGARET BREAY,

Hon. Sec. Members' Rights Defence Committee.

THE SIGNIFICANT SILENCE.

DEAR MADAM,—I confess, though I suppose I do not show my wisdom thereby, that I was surprised that none of the officials of the Royal British Nurses' Association attended the Public Meeting at St. Martin's Town Hall, convened by the Members' Rights Defence Committee of the Royal British Nurses' Association. I came up myself, at considerable inconvenience, for a distance of sixty miles, to attend the meeting, hoping to hear both sides, as it was advertised that free discussion was invited; but with the exception of one person, the secretary of the Nurses' Club in the *Hospital Buildings*—a fact which speaks for itself to all who have even a rudimentary acquaintance with nursing politics—no one was present apparently who had anything to say on the opposite side; for when an opportunity was given for discussion before the Resolution was put to the Meeting, Miss Helen Foggo-Thompson, instead of speaking to the Resolution, got up and made a personal attack upon Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, of the type with which her *début* at the Annual Meeting of the Royal British Nurses' Association at the Imperial Institute has familiarized us, insulting and incoherent, but absolutely irrelevant to the subject before the Meeting, on the whole, though it would have looked better for the side of which she was the sole champion, if she had responded to the invitation to come on to the platform, so that her remarks might be audible to the Meeting. I am inclined to think that, if she had no more to say than the fragmentary and malicious remarks which reached

me, neither the meeting, nor her own party, were the losers by her refusal. But if Miss Thompson is the sole champion of the honorary officers, or at least, the only one who will even attempt to defend them "in the open," the public will inevitably draw its own conclusions. If the officials are invited to express their views on the charges made against them, and given a public opportunity for refuting them, and then do not avail themselves of that opportunity, but "sit tight" in dark corners, and only attempt to defend themselves in the privacy of packed meetings, there is only one possible inference—that being, that they are afraid to face the light of day. The justice of the demand for a public inquiry is therefore gaining ground with the public, and I believe that the officials, by their unwise and short-sighted policy of "hush," are quickly bringing us within measurable distance of it. I should also like to draw attention to one other point, which is, that I believe Miss Pell Smith was absolutely correct in her view that the bulk of the nurses in the Provinces believe that their interests are perfectly safe in Mrs. Bedford Fenwick's hands, and consequently that they do not trouble themselves very much about their own affairs. But, I feel strongly that it is time we nurses roused ourselves to support those who are fighting our battles, that we should not be content to have everything done for us, but that we should feel that our own responsibilities in this respect cannot conscientiously be ignored, and that we shall fail in our duty if we do not publicly come forward and support Mrs. Bedford Fenwick in her efforts for the welfare of our profession. For my own part, though from the first I have never written to the press, or spoken in public upon this matter, I intend to keep silence no longer, but to take the first opportunity at one of the coming meetings, to speak plainly as a nurse member upon the subject.

I am, dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

ROSE CONWAY.

St. Michael's Infant School, Maidstone.

[We thank Miss Conway for her kind letter. It is dictated by a sense of professional responsibility, with which we hope many members of the Royal British Nurses' Association will be inspired at this critical time in the history of nursing. If by selfish and timorous inertia the members keep silence whilst their professional rights and privileges are taken from them—as suggested in the new code of Bye-Laws drawn up by the Honorary Officers—they will subject themselves to the contempt and indignation of future generations of British Nurses. Professional liberty is a corporate and not an individual responsibility.—EDITOR.]

QUITE SO!

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I should like to call the attention of nurses to the fact that the Editor of the *Hospital Nursing Mirror* invariably inserts in its columns letters and articles from every Tom, Dick and Harry who wishes to preach at, or abuse nurses, and neglects to insert letters and articles of correspondents in praise of nurses.

Yours faithfully,

C. L.

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