

Someone had to suffer, and the incessant public and private attacks made from 1887 to 1893 upon the founders of the Association were borne with as much silence and equanimity as possible.

But it can, therefore, be easily understood what motives actuated Dr. Bedford Fenwick in the proceeding which he took as soon as the Royal Charter was granted. In June and July, 1893, he placed before more than one leading member of the Association in writing his opinions to the following effect:—That the Association had passed through six years of intense hostility in its efforts to bring about urgently needed reforms in the nursing profession, but the chief odium for the movement had been concentrated upon himself and his wife, and that they had willingly endured this in the full conviction that the reforms they were working for were just and right; that the Privy Council, having recognized the justice of the case of the Association, and having granted it a Royal Charter, the work which they had set themselves to do had been accomplished; that it appeared to him, therefore, that it would be for the benefit of the Association if those, to whom such antagonism was felt, were to retire, and allow others who had taken no prominent part in the previous contest to manage the Association in future. Those to whom this communication was addressed, refused, however, to sanction either Dr. or Mrs. Bedford Fenwick taking the step which he suggested, and the letters which were written on this subject will undoubtedly cause much surprise, in the light of the events which have since occurred, if they are produced at the forthcoming public inquiry into the management of the Association.

The suggestion, to which we have referred, was definitely refused, in such a manner, and with such authority, that it was impossible for Dr. and Mrs. Fenwick to retire from the active management of the Association after the Charter was granted. But it will be found, if they are published, that the letters to which we have referred, accurately predicted what has since occurred, although a further train of circumstances has taken place which no honourable person would have believed to be possible. We shall now proceed to show that, as soon as the Charter was obtained, efforts were at once commenced to oust those who had been the chief workers in the Association, and that these efforts were actively aided and abetted by a few persons outside the ranks of the Association, and by others, who, having taken

little or no part in the previous contest, were desirous of gaining personal ends by joining it, when it had achieved success.

### Annotations.

#### MEN ON MIDWIVES.

WE quote, in another column, an important discussion which recently took place at a meeting of the General Medical Council, with regard to the Midwives' Registration Bill. It is evident that only two courses are open with regard to legislation on this subject:—  
(1) To legalise an inferior order of medical practitioners, under the name of midwives.  
(2) To employ women as midwifery nurses. The former procedure is, in our opinion, unnecessary, and we believe that it would be ill-advised. Women are no longer debarred from becoming medical practitioners, and, therefore, those who desire to act in this capacity should obviously qualify themselves for the position. We have always held, and we still hold, that the midwife, who before the true basis of medical education was rightly understood, undoubtedly met a want, should now give place to the midwifery or obstetric nurse. We do not by this mean that women should be legally recognized as competent to undertake the responsibilities of the position which they have hitherto occupied under the name of midwives, having had only the present usual inadequate training, while they are powerless to obtain the fees for the work which they have performed. Under such conditions, neither the public nor the midwives themselves would be any better off than at present. The only satisfactory solution of the question, because the only one which is formed on a sound basis, we believe to be the employment of registered obstetric nurses, acting under direct medical control, who shall have received an efficient general training before taking up the special work to which they intend to devote themselves. These nurses, having proved themselves efficient and trustworthy, and after examination by an independent central board of medical men, and superintendents of nurse training schools, should be entitled to have their names placed upon a register, to which the public had access, by which means they would gain a status in their own profession, equivalent to that now enjoyed by medical men in theirs—a recognized status to which they are undoubtedly entitled. We must take the strongest exception to any scheme being

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