

ments, written for the information of the British Red Cross only. The "loyalty" correspondence includes confidential letters and reports upon some thousands of persons, all of which were written relying on the secrecy of the B.R.C., and many of them addressed personally to Mrs. Watson, relying upon her discretion. Thus Mrs. Watson considered that she had no right to hand these important documents to a stranger without the express instructions of the Society on whose behalf she held them, and without giving a full explanation of the serious results to the B.R.C. which might follow. Mrs. Watson tried to see Sir Arthur Stanley on the following day, a Saturday, but was unable to do so. On the Monday morning she left an explanatory letter for him at 83, Pall Mall. The only reply which she had to her letter was received on the following day, informing her that the transfer would take place on that day, and directing her to hand over all her papers to the Secretary.

Mrs. Watson does not wish to raise any personal question in reference to this matter, but she considers that after three years' service as the head of the nursing department of the Anglo-French Hospitals Committee, it was her duty to exercise her judgment in such a delicate situation as declining to carry out the transfer of confidential papers without direct instructions to do so.

In this connection it would be interesting to know what action the Joint War Committee has taken in this controversy, and how it proposes for the future to protect the professional heads of Departments from "summary dismissal" by its Chairman.

This is the question which is agitating the Nursing Profession, and it would be well for the Joint War Committee to realise that, although the public has supplied it with millions of money for the benefit of the sick and wounded, it is not empowered to treat professional women and others with contemptuous lack of consideration and injustice. The public have not yet forgotten the manner in which Dame Katherine Furse was treated after her valuable national work in connection with the V.A.D.s, and the "dismissal" of Mrs. Keiro-Watson. R.R.C., should not be allowed to pass without protest.

THE POSITION OF POOR-LAW NURSES.

At a recent meeting of the Executive Committee of the Council of the National Poor-Law Officers Association, Dr. Williams reported on the position and prospects of Poor-Law Nurses. The following synopsis of his remarks appear in the *Poor-Law Officers' Journal* :—

He explained that they had been invited by the College of Nurses to submit a list of nominees for seats on the Executive of the College. A congress of Poor-Law nurses was held at Sheffield and the nurses selected ten of their own members;

whose names were duly submitted. They were informed that implied promise could not be fulfilled as there had been certain unexpected developments. The College had been approached by the Royal British Nurses' Association; it was suggested that the two bodies should work together, and, therefore, the circumstances had entirely changed. At the same time, Sir Arthur Stanley promised that he would see what could be done and they had since learnt that Sir Arthur did suggest that five additional seats should be put on the Executive; but there was some doubt as to whether those seats were intended for the Poor-Law or for the Army and Navy. To obtain co-operation with the Royal British Nurses' Association it was necessary to have a supplementary Charter, to the terms of which the British Nurses' Association could not agree, and they had withdrawn. The British Nurses' Association having withdrawn, fifteen seats were left on the Committee, and it was believed that the Poor-Law could get at least some of them. But the British Nurses' Association asked Poor-Law nurses to work with them and to see whether they could not safeguard the position of nurses in general. They had sent an invitation to the National to send representatives to meet representatives of their own and other bodies to see what could be done in the matter. At the meeting of the Organization Sub-Committee the preceding day, the question of holding another congress of nurses was discussed, and it was thought advisable to do so, and it was further decided that the nurses themselves were the people to decide what should be done. On the strength of the promise that they would be given seats on the College Executive, they had been advising nurses to register; the whole question was being revised and the Organization Sub-Committee felt that the proper people to consider the matter were the nurses themselves. Therefore, it was intended to hold another congress of nurses, to discuss the whole position, and to that congress the National Association would send representatives to meet representatives of other nursing bodies. Another matter which had engaged their efforts had been the formation of the Nursing Sections, and Mr. Richmond had taken an immense trouble. Twelve sections had been formed in different parts of the country, and in eight branches the question was still under consideration; in six branches nothing had been done, and other branches were working on different lines. It was pleasing to be able to report that the nurses had been joining very well, and it was also pleasing to note that in the correspondence they had had with branches of the nursing profession they had been able to show that Poor-Law nursing was as good as any other branch of nursing in the country. They had been able to a very great extent to do away with the feeling of disparagement of Poor-Law nursing, and they had had some charming letters from secretaries of nursing societies. All this had done good in connection with the action they had taken in regard to nurses.

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