

"J'ACCUSE."

[We have received a symposium of three letters from the Royal Free Hospital, for two of which we shall find space next week.

We have given much space in the past few weeks to the affairs of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, with which these letters are concerned, and we may sum up our conclusions from personal experience. The record of this Council since Miss Cox-Davies threw the apple of discord into its midst and proposed to deprive the whole Nursing Profession of the documentary evidence of its efficiency on the State Register, by depriving nurses of the record of their certificates, has been discreditable in the highest degree.

We took the lead in making public in this JOURNAL the cruel economic injury which would result to certificated nurses in the near future if the policy of Miss Cox-Davies and her supporters—Miss Dowbiggin, Miss Peterkin, and Dr. Goodall—was enforced, and we, together with Miss Villiers and others, have been severely penalised for daring to oppose this outrage, and for succeeding in averting it.

In retaliation we accuse Miss Cox-Davies and her supporters, the majority of the Council, of:—

1. Making secret and defamatory accusations against us at the Ministry of Health, which they had not the courage to make face to face in the Council Chamber.
2. Going on strike for ten weeks whilst bargaining with the Ministry of Health how to eject us from the Chair of the Registration Committee, and otherwise deprive us of power and free speech.
3. Consenting to return to duty upon the understanding that their indefensible policy of reprisals should be carried out.
4. Consorting together outside the Council Chamber to draft new Rules to make it impossible for any self-respecting nurse to accept office on the Registration Committee (1) by making a salaried official—the Registrar—responsible for the statutory powers entrusted by Parliament to members of the Council, and (2) accepting for registration persons without documentary evidence, upon second-hand information from irresponsible persons, such as the Secretaries of nurses' societies, so that the broken pledge of the Council of the College of Nursing, Ltd. (of which Miss Cox-Davies was an active member) might be partially redeemed; and College nurses placed on the State Register on preferential terms, and incidentally an electorate for College candidates provided at the forthcoming election.
5. Consorting together to eject us from the Registration and other Committees.
6. Depreciating the power and prestige of Nursing as a Profession by placing a medical specialist in the Chair of the Registration Committee (on the proposal of Miss Cox-Davies) instead of a Registered Nurse, and issuing certificates to use the title "Registered Nurse," signed by medical men and not by a professional member of the Council.
7. Eliminating nursing experts to place a lay-

woman, ignorant of nursing education, ethics, and economics, on our Education Committee, and thus depriving the great branch of Fever nursing of expert representation at a very critical period of the deliberations.

8. And again, upon the proposal of a College Matron, placing another titled laywoman in the Chair of our General Purposes Committee, which controls our professional headquarters, and recommends expenditure to the extent of thousands of pounds of the nurses' money towards which, as a nominated unprofessional member of the Council, she has no financial responsibility.

We are not posing as martyrs—far from it—but we are organising ourselves outside the General Nursing Council to demand personal and professional responsibility for Registered Nurses concerning their own professional affairs—responsibility enjoyed by the members of the medical and other professions composed of enfranchised citizens. We hope in the future to make it impossible for cabals within the General Nursing Council to penalise their colleagues whose integrity stands in the way of the subjugation of the nursing profession by their employers, with whom Miss Cox-Davies is firmly allied. We leave honourable people to draw their own conclusions on the recent actions of the majority of the Council. We have no fear of their verdict.

The despotic party-spirit and narrowness of vision of which Miss Cox-Davies complains—which "checked and defeated every effort to organise the Nursing Profession for so many years," have been cardinal offences of the anti-registrationists, not of those who promoted Nursing reform, and won the Nurses' Registration Acts; and it is this spirit of intolerance of power for the worker upon the part of the lay, medical and majority of Matron members of the General Nursing Council and the monopoly of power by these persons, which has roused the determined resistance of the representatives of the rank and file who are the back-bone of the Nursing Profession.—ED.]

PLEASE NOTICE.

Some time ago, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick gave those nurses with whom she had worked permission to use her name as a reference for State Registration. She now feels compelled to withdraw this permission, as the General Nursing Council has repudiated its responsibility for scrutinising Forms and references. As a member of the General Nursing Council Mrs. Fenwick declines to fill in reference Forms for the sole inspection of the Registrar, whose absolute authority in this connection she does not recognise.

We regret to be compelled to hold over several important letters, and interesting communications.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTIONS.

May 13th.—What are the principal glands of the body, and what are their functions?

May 20th.—Describe the part played by insects in spreading disease.

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