

Free Hospital Nurses' League by a Member of the General Nursing Council, who stated "That she had received a communication from a Royal Free Hospital Nurse who regarded this new Rule as the first wedge with regard to coercion."

May I, as Secretary of the above League, point out that neither I, nor the Executive Committee, have received any letter of protest from the Members, with regard to this Rule. May I further add that consideration will reveal the fact that no coercion whatever is being used (individual application being necessary), but rather the way being made easier for those who wish to become registered?

If complaint is necessary, I suggest that the Secretary should be approached, as would have been the correct procedure in the first instance.

IVEY C. M. LITTLE,  
*Hon. Secretary of the Royal Free  
Hospital Nurses' League.*

[The member of the G.N.C. who put forward the views of a certificated Royal Free Hospital Nurse was Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, to whom the nurse addressed her protest. We cannot agree that the "correct procedure" of this free member of the profession should be to "approach" the Secretary of an organisation to which she does not belong, before expressing an opinion on her own affairs.—ED.]

#### FREE IN THE BEST SENSE OF THE WORD. *To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.*

MADAM,—As a member of the Nursing Staff of the Royal Free Hospital, I write in reference to a statement made by a member of the General Nursing Council at the meeting held on April 21st, as quoted in the Nursing Press of last week.

This refers to the application made by our League to be recognised as an approved body under Rule 9A. The word "coercion" does not appear to be in any sense applicable in this connection, as each applicant still has to make her own personal application to be registered. Moreover, I and my colleagues—members of the Nursing Staff—resent such a word being used in any matters connected with our Training School or our League. We have always specially prided ourselves for many years past on being "Free" in the best sense of a most mis-used word. Freedom of thought, speech and action, has been ever encouraged by our Matron, and can truly be said to be the hall-mark of our Training School, as it is also the hall-mark of our League, and we strongly deprecate such a misleading reference being made.

I should be grateful if you would be so good as to give publicity to this letter in your next issue.

Yours faithfully,

A MEMBER OF THE NURSING STAFF AND OF  
THE ROYAL FREE HOSPITAL NURSES' LEAGUE.

[We have all a right to our opinions, and the Royal Free Nurse alluded to, considered rightly, in our opinion, that each nurse should herself be entirely responsible, not only for making application for State Registration direct to the Statutory

Body appointed by Parliament to compile the State Register, but for personally providing documentary evidence of training to the officials appointed by the Council to verify it and submit it for approval to the Council. The Council, in her opinion, had no right to delegate its statutory responsibility to irresponsible officials of private bodies of nurses—or, indeed, to any bodies of nurses, as pressure for or against registration was thus made possible. Considering the "coercion" used by many matrons, and some hospital governors (who actually paid their fees out of charitable funds) to drive nurses on to the College Register, any repetition of this policy in connection with the State Register should be discouraged. Our correspondent prides herself and her League colleagues on being "Free" in the best sense of a mis-used word." We are told that "freedom of thought, speech and action has been ever encouraged by our Matron," who is President of the Royal Free League. It would be interesting to know if the 178 certificated nurses who compose the League were given an opportunity of expressing an opinion on the Resolution brought forward by their President at a meeting of the General Nursing Council of which she is a member, proposing to deprive them, together with all their certificated colleagues in England and Wales, of the record of their Certificates of Proficiency on the State Register—such Certificates of Training being awarded, we believe, by the authorities of the Royal Free Hospital after examination, "to practice as Certificated Nurses."

If this proposal was made by their President without consultation with the certificated nurses of the hospital—of which she is Matron—we wonder where the "Freedom of thought, speech, and action" of the members of this League comes in! If they knew of the attack on their professional status, and let it pass by default, the sooner they learn what real "freedom" means the better. No one nurse, or group of nurses can shirk her professional responsibility in such a crisis without playing a coward's part, resulting in the shattering of her own moral fibre—whilst causing professional damage to her more courageous colleagues.

We hope our correspondent has read and marked what Sir James Barrie said in this connection in his wonderful Rectorial Address to students at St. Andrews last week. We should like to see that Address framed and publicly displayed in every Nurse Training School and distributed to the members of every Nurses' League.—ED.]

#### THE BETRAYAL OF THE NURSING PROFESSION.

*To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.*

DEAR MADAM,—*Re* Miss Cox-Davies's letter in JOURNAL, May 6th, may I remark that from a professional woman with thirty-three years' experience, one would have expected a little more courtesy in referring to the Matrons of the leading London Fever Hospitals, rather than "some Matrons of Fever Hospitals." As a Matron of a

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