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"QUI NON PROFICIT, DEFICIT."

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EDITORIAL.

MR. HENRY C. BURDETT.

OUR readers will remember that a fortnight ago we called attention to the charge made in the columns of the *Hospital* against a member of the British Nurses' Association. We reprint in another column this week the full libel, and a letter from Mr. Burdett's solicitors. We congratulate ourselves upon our success in putting Mr. Burdett on his defence, and we ask the British Nurses' Association to take its moral to heart. For nearly three years its managers have patiently borne many malicious misstatements which Mr. Burdett's paper has published concerning them, their proposals, their progress, and their members. And the result has been that week after week the stream of abuse has flowed on. We have attempted now and again to stem the tide, but having only a public interest in the matter, never mentioned names. But the last insult transcending all bounds, we took Mr. Burdett, as editor of the *Hospital*, personally to task. The effect has been quite rapid and complete enough

to satisfy us, and we hope others also, as to the advisability of the course which we adopted. We will now briefly dissect his remarkable defence, premising that we adhere to every single statement we make, or have made, and are prepared to prove them, and a great many more, if Mr. Burdett will give us the opportunity. We take the paragraphs as numbered in the defence.

I.—Mr. Burdett styles himself "the Founder" of the Hospitals' Association, and whenever there is any credit to be gained from its proceedings Mr. Burdett is the Hospitals' Association. Mr. Burdett nominated the Members of the "Sectional Committee," but, as he over-ruled their decisions, and as the Council did not adopt their proposal of a three years' training as an essential for Registration, but issued a notice that Nurses would be registered after one year's training upon application, not to a professional committee, but to the Secretary of the Hospitals' Association, very naturally the well-known Matrons who were acting upon the Committee retired, and immediately formed the British Nurses' Association, to undertake the work of Registration under professional auspices. These, we learn on the best authority, are the simple facts of the case. Then Mr. Burdett softly and silently got into the background, and Dr. Steele appeared on the scene. A new committee was formed, which issued a circular, asking nine questions, to "thirty-four establishments in England and Scotland which profess to educate Nurses"—only a fraction, be it remembered, of the Nurse-training Hospitals in the kingdom. Of these only nineteen took the trouble to answer the questions. To the first one, "Do you consider a general system of Registration desirable for Trained Nurses?" *nine replied in the affirmative, but the remaining ten "desired to be let alone" (sic).* The *Lancet* and this journal naturally cast great ridicule on the Commit-

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