

in question imagine that their former Nurses are, to some extent, responsible to them and under their control; an assumption which is, of course, without a shadow of foundation, either legal or moral.

The employer to whom the questions are addressed is desired to state the date upon which the Nurse was received into his or her employment, and the date of her departure, it being apparently taken for granted that within some transient period her retirement from any other Institution would be certain. We would very respectfully ask the Committee of this Hospital how they consider that they show their interest in the work and welfare of their former Nurses by seeking for this inquisitorial information concerning their subsequent careers? It is permissible also to ask what they would do to protect the public if the confidential information thus gained as to the efficiency and conduct of any old pupil proved that she was absolutely unfitted for the responsible duties she was able to undertake under the cover of their certificate that she was a thoroughly trained and responsible Nurse? Have they at last realised that a public register of Nurses is of immense public advantage, or do they merely propose to embody the results of their inquiries in the private archives of their Institution?

We base our protest against these proceedings on the broad ground of freedom. We maintain that adult women are regarded by the State as responsible citizens, and that no private persons, therefore, whether acting collectively as a corporate body, or individually according to their own conception of the canons of good taste, have the slightest moral or legal right to interfere with, or dictate to, trained Nurses who are neither in their employment nor in any way subject to their control. If Nurses—very wisely—for their own protection and for the elevation of their profession, band themselves together, and, of their own free will, yield obedience to common rules of discipline, they are only following the example of men in many other callings, and will, doubtless, reap similar benefits. But that is totally different from an assumption of authority over the lives and characters of such women—advanced without rhyme or reason by persons who are, for the most part, extremely ignorant of everything connected with Nursing.

Finally, we cannot congratulate the Committee of this Hospital upon the method they have followed, and we consider that it would have been more courteous if they had adopted the customary procedure of obtaining the consent of ladies into whose movements and characters they desired to inquire, before they commenced to make private inquiries concerning them.

FIGHT IT OUT.

Our readers will peruse, with much interest, an account which we give in another column of the recent attempt to blackmail a Nurse, by one of her patients. It is only necessary here to express the pleasure with which we observe the courageous attitude assumed by the Nurse when placed in such a trying and difficult position, and we commend it to the attention of all her fellow workers. Nurses, like Doctors, are often placed, by the circumstances of their work, in peculiarly difficult relations with their patients, and it may be that they will find—as the Medical Profession to its cost has often found—that charges may be trumped up against them which would be most difficult to disprove. In such circumstances, when the whole career of the accused may seem to be at stake, experience shows that there are some who, rather than face publicity and possible scandal, are willing, weakly, to be victimised. Such a course is not only weak, but foolish, because it places the accused still more in the power of the blackmailer. Medical men have combined to form various societies so as to defend themselves from such charges at the smallest possible cost, and it may become necessary, if Nurses are frequently attacked in the same way, that they should take similar steps for their legal protection. Meanwhile, however, the advice that we give to all Nurses who find themselves in such a position, is to face their accuser at once and to place the matter in the hands of a lawyer. A few sentences of similar severity to that recorded in our columns to-day, would probably make such persons very cautious in attempting to carry on proceedings with relation to the members of the Nursing Profession.

SECOND HEARING.

It would almost seem from the recent discoveries which have been made in the transmission of sound without the medium of a conducting wire, that we are on the verge of great advances in electrical science. Some of our Scotch fellow-countrymen believe in second sight, whereby peculiarly gifted persons are supposed to possess the power of seeing occurrences which are transpiring, or have transpired, at distances, and under circumstances which would preclude their observation by the optical powers of ordinary individuals. But *clairvoyance* may, after all, have a basis in physical fact, if it is possible to hear sounds from a great distance in the manner now described by electrical engineers, and which people in the north would doubtless consider to be "no canny." Experiments have been made which have proved that speech can be maintained across an air space of one mile and a quarter by means of electrical waves transmitted along the surface of the water of a lake. On the strength of these experiments, visions have been excited that within a brief space of time it will be possible to communicate with the theoretical inhabitants of the planet Mars. While waiting for that consummation, the present facts, at any rate, open up a vista of immense improvements in telephonic communication. And as a practical result, it is permissible to express the hope that means may speedily be taken to lessen the cost of telegraphic and telephonic communications in this country, because it is indisputable that, in such advantages, we are a very long way behind those enjoyed by other nations.

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