

women who, directly their backs are turned, are their most unmerciful critics.

I am, dear Madam, yours, etc.,

A PLAIN-SPOKEN WOMAN.

[It will be observed that for three weeks running we have had the pain of reporting cases of theft by so-called trained nurses.—ED.]

#### GHOSTS.

*To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."*

DEAR MADAM,—Hospital nurses seem rather a modern creation to have already begun to pay ghostly visitations to haunted houses, but your review last week set me thinking on the subject of ghosts, and wondering if any nurses have had experiences similar to my own. If they have, I think it would be of interest to the readers of the NURSING RECORD if they would relate them. It is on this principle that I am sending you an account of what happened in a house where I was nursing, in case you may think it worth while to publish it.

I was nursing a patient, who had recently returned from abroad, in a vicarage house in Yorkshire. My patient had gone to stay with his great friend, who was the vicar of the parish, and had become very ill there, and I went down to nurse him, and, if possible, bring him up to London, which I eventually did, with the help of the St. John Ambulance Association. I was sitting in my patient's room one Saturday night, about twelve o'clock, when I heard a man's step going downstairs past the door. I thought it was the vicar going to get some brandy for his wife, who had gone to bed early the evening before, not being very well, and the idea of anything less substantial never entered my head.

The next morning, at breakfast, I said to the vicar's wife, "I am afraid you had rather a disturbed night, last night. I heard Mr. — go down stairs." She laughed and said, "Mr. — did not go down. You've heard the ghost!" She then told me that the house possessed a ghost, which went up and down the stairs, and which had been heard by other people besides myself. There was also a carriage which drove up to the front door, and away again, which she herself had heard. Knowing nothing about the story, soon after the vicar was first appointed to the living, she heard a carriage drive up, and never doubting but that her husband, who was out, had returned from his drive, she went to the door to meet him. There was nothing there! Afterwards she was told of the phantom carriage.

Now, how are these things to be accounted for? I certainly was not expecting to hear ghosts, and that there was anything ghostly about the very human, and apparently substantial footsteps, which I heard, never entered my head. The vicar and his wife were both most matter-of-fact people, upon whom the presence of a ghost, more or less, in the house did not seem to have any effect at all, but, nevertheless this visitor had been heard by more than one person who knew nothing whatever about it.

The house was a comparatively new one, not more than twenty years old I think, but there were various tragedies connected with it. The son of a former vicar had returned home from college very much in debt, and the following day had been brought home dead, there being considerable mystery connected with his

death. A predecessor of the vicar had also committed suicide in a lane near the vicarage, and a butler in the house had put an end to himself in the room in which my patient was ill.

Perhaps someone, learned in these matters, will offer an explanation of circumstances which I can only relate, but cannot account for.

It would be interesting to know, if any other night nurses have had similar experiences. Night nurses, of all people, would seem to have exceptional opportunities in this respect. I never heard the ghostly visitor again, though I listened for him. If I had done, I should have been tempted to go out on the stairs, to find out if he were visible, as well as audible.

I am, dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

A PRACTICAL PERSON.

#### THE ROYAL COMMISSION AND THE SPREAD OF LEPROSY.

*To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."*

MADAM,—The interesting articles, on Vaccination and Leprosy, in the NURSING RECORD and HOSPITAL WORLD, of September 4th, prompt me to refer to the subjects. The Majority Report of this lengthy inquiry declares that vaccination has not communicated leprosy, while the Minority Report says:—"There are several cases on record." Which of these verdicts is true? The explanation is not far to seek. Leprosy, like other bacterial diseases, is admitted to be inoculable by the highest authorities, as shown by Mr. Tebb's work, "The Récrudescence of Leprosy and its Causation" (Swan, Sonnenschein), and in the evidence laid before the Royal Commission under searching cross-examination. A most distressing instance of this inoculation of leprosy by means of vaccination, in the family of a Wesleyan minister, residing at St. Kitt's, British West Indies, was reported in the newspapers not long ago. It may not be known to all the readers of the NURSING RECORD that leprosy has been steadily increasing for many years, and communications from Trinidad, Barbados, the Virgin Islands, British Guiana, Hawaii, and South Africa, show that the increase, in the opinion of competent medical observers, is due, more or less, to vaccination. This danger was pointed out by Dr. R. Hall Bakewell, Vaccinator-General of Trinidad, and one of the Government witnesses to the Select Vaccination Committee of 1871. "The fact that leprosy," said Dr. Bakewell, "might be inoculated. I consider to be proved as much as any fact in medical science," and he testifies that he had "seen several cases of leprosy in which it (vaccination) seemed to be the only explanation." Dr. F. C. Castor, the Medical Superintendent of the Leper Asylum, British Guiana, in his Report for 1887, p. 43, affirms "as a palpable fact, which should be made known far and wide in countries where leprosy is endemic and widespread, as with us, that there is every certainty of inoculation through vaccination."

Successive Presidents of the Board of Health of the Hawaiian Islands have issued reports stating that vaccination has been one of the chief causes in introducing new centres of the leprosy contagion, and has become a prolific source of propagation of this malady. As a consequence, arm-to-arm vaccination has been abandoned by order of the Government authorities. Not so, however, amongst our colonists

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