

stood her in good stead with the jury and general public, and proved her or her counsel to be full of resource. There is still an enormous amount of sentiment attached by the male sex and the public to that "ministering angel"—the nurse of the sick poor, and it is useless to argue that this sentiment was not aroused by the sight of a woman in the dock, to all outward appearance the personification of gentleness and modesty. How it would have fared with Elizabeth Brandish, had she appeared clothed, as are the majority of persons, in everyday unromantic garb, it is hard to say, but if anything could have added to the horror of the unnatural crime of which she was accused, in the minds of honourable persons, it was this *pose* of the prisoner in the dock as a member of the great nursing sisterhood to which she does not justly belong. Her appearance was an outrage on good taste, honour, and justice. It only remains for Madame Tussaud to have a presentment of this outrage set up in the "Chamber of Horrors," to complete the degradation to which the nursing uniform has been subjected. Is the Royal British Nurses' Association so lost to all sense of professional feeling that it has not even attempted to protect trained nurses from this disgrace? The culpable inertia of this so-called Association of Nurses; encourages by its silence the very abuses which we members associated ourselves to prevent."

THE question as to what is a competent trained nurse was raised by the first annual report of the Cornwall County Nursing Association, which stated to the annual meeting of subscribers recently held at Truro, that it was the hope of the Association to see the work which had been founded, extend and progress "until every parish in the county is within reach of a competent trained nurse to attend the sick and helpless."

THE training which is given to candidates for the position of village nurses under the association, is stated to be as follows:—Four are at present being trained at the Clapham Maternity, and at the branch house at Battersea, and one will begin her training there in April, one at the Paddington Workhouse, and three will begin to train at Plaistow in June next. Two points arise out of this statement, the futility of maternity training as a qualification for subsequent general nursing, and in consequence the question as to whether the comparatively large sum expended on this training is spent to the best advantage for the sick poor, for whom it has been subscribed. The sum expended upon training four candidates at Clapham was £183 14s. 6d., or about £45 15s. per head. The three who are to be trained at Plaistow will cost the Association £99 14s. 7d., or about £33 3s. 8d. per head.

WITH regard to this, it must be remembered that the candidates are young country women, presumably entirely ignorant of the elements of nursing, who are sent for a certain time to a maternity home. Here they are taught the elements of nursing under the following disadvantageous conditions. The patients are women only, so that these nurses will have had absolutely no experience of the needs of men, when they come to nurse them in a country district, and further the women, in the one case entirely, and in the other in a large measure, are not suffering from general diseases; are not, in fact, except exceptional cases, sick at all, and therefore the knowledge of the nursing of these cases can in no way be considered as qualifying for ordinary nursing.

THE money expended upon this very partial, inadequate, and short training might surely be laid out to better advantage. Notably, in paying nurses already thoroughly trained, and attracting them by the offer of adequate salaries. For the salary of one of these nurses, when she begins to work, is to be "not less than 14s. per week, which sum shall cover her board, lodging, and washing, her uniform (after the first year) to be provided by the district to which she is appointed." It is quite superfluous to point out that such a meagre salary will never command the services of a high class of nurses. A fact which is noted in the report is that "Miss Michie has experienced considerable difficulty in finding vacancies for the candidates in training establishments." We confess we should have been surprised if this had not been the case. Superintendents of training schools know well that an efficient training cannot be given in less than three years, and training schools which value their reputation do not care to give to young women, who will afterwards quote their training school, the smattering of nursing knowledge which can be imparted in six months or a year. Such a course would not redound to the credit of the training school. Neither can the nurses so trained, in our opinion, be considered as competent.

WE notice in the *Bradford Observer*, a letter signed F.R.C.S., in which, after commenting on the fact mentioned in the report of the Bradford Nurses' Institution, that the Institution has ceased to train its nurses at the Bradford Royal Infirmary, the correspondent says:—"It is most important to everyone that nurses who may be placed in charge of serious cases should be sufficiently trained; but on this point the report is wisely silent."

FROM this we should infer the writer of the letter, recognizing the importance of a three-year qualification, upon which he insists, sees to it that he only employs nurses who have received this amount of training. We are the more surprised, therefore, to observe in the next issue of the same paper a letter

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)