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THE Nursing Record

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Editorial.

A GRAVE OMISSION.

WE are strongly of opinion that the constitution of the South African Hospitals Commission ought to have been discussed in the House of Commons, and the curt manner in which this privilege was refused by the Leader of the House, and determinedly opposed by the Speaker, leaves very little faith in the *bona fides* of the Government in relation to this inquiry. Indeed, so lacking in tact and good feeling has been the policy pursued by Mr. Arthur Balfour during the handling of this matter that it at once arouses a conviction in the public mind that it is intended to hush up "inevitable" mismanagement, which might prove awkward for "the Party." The Tory press, of course, highly commends the constitution of the Commission, and says it cannot fail to give widespread satisfaction. We deny that. It does not satisfy one at all. If we went to see a presentment of "Hamlet" at the theatre we should scarcely appreciate the tragedy if the principal character were left out; and we quite fail to understand how any Commission or Committee of Inquiry, or any other body, presumably appointed to investigate the truth—and nothing but the truth—in re-

lation to the treatment of the sick soldiers in South Africa, can do its work to the best possible advantage, if the nursing of the sick, that is to say, the practical treatment of the patients, is to be ignored. We say ignored, because nursing is now a highly skilled vocation, of equal importance in the recovery of the sick to the medical skill which it carries into execution. Therefore if a useful result is to be looked for from inquiry into nursing details—and of what real importance is the nurse in the care of *medical* invalids, such as enteric, dysentery, and pneumonia, only the patients can realise—such inquiry should be made by a thoroughly qualified nurse; and, again, as the whole domestic organization of a hospital should be in the hands of experienced women, surely it needs a woman to know if such organization were good or bad.

Therefore the exclusion of women from this Committee of Inquiry is a very grave omission—if, as we say, the truth is really its aim.

Acting on this conviction, the Matrons' Council approached the Leader of the House of Commons by letter, placing before him the advisability of including a nursing expert on the Commission, and it is to be regretted that he apparently has not grasped the importance of the suggestion.

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