

school of nursing at St. Bartholomew's, she might have been as devoted to her patients as the best amongst us. She would, no doubt, be a member of the League of St. Bartholomew's Nurses, and the name of Sarah Gamp might even head the list at the final examination of probationers, and the coveted gold medal glisten on her spotless uniform.

M. B.

The Nurses' Co-operation.

A PLAIN, UNVARNISHED TALE.

Sir Henry Burdett is week by week endeavouring to utilize his newspaper for the purpose of stirring up strife in the Nurses' Co-operation. His tactics are simple enough. Any nurse, or organization of nurses which does not acclaim, and bow the knee to this self-constituted nursing pope must run the gauntlet of misrepresentation in his weekly organ. By this time his policy is surely too well known in the nursing world for any heed to be paid to such conduct.

Any differences in the Co-operation can, no doubt, be satisfactorily settled without outside interference from laymen who have no *locus standi* in the nursing profession, and the nurses will be well advised if they decline to be manipulated by the chairman of Welsbachs, and settle their affairs with their own Committee.

We pointed out last week that owing to the constitution of this Co-operation, for the drafting of which Sir Henry Burdett must be mainly held responsible, the position of the nurses is not that of members, but of employees of the committee, and any concession made to them by the committee, on the representation of their wishes, is an act of courtesy, not of obligation, on the part of the governing body. They have to thank Sir Henry Burdett and his friends for this fundamental mistake in their constitution. But, in spite of this, very liberal representation is granted to the nurses on the committee. On this body of fourteen persons, six at least must be elected as representatives of the staff by the nurses themselves, and eight may be thus elected. We believe we are right in saying that at the present time the nurses have eight representatives, and further, that two out of the six persons appointed by the co-operation are trained nurses. Therefore, the nurses, if they chose, can carry any point in Committee. This being so, they would, indeed, be ill-advised to allow dissension to be sown amongst them, and they will do well to take warning by the Royal British Nurses' Association, which, since Sir Henry Burdett's creatures have been in office, has steadily declined in the estimation of nurses throughout the Empire.

We must now refer more in detail to the story of the "little home at Clapham" than we were able to do last week, as this throws a side light

upon Sir Henry's relations with the Nurses' Co-operation. We should like to ask him whether it is true that in October, 1896, he offered to transfer to the Nurses' Co-operation the lease of Bycroft House at Clapham (the ground rent, rates and taxes being something under £400 a year) as a residential home, and that coupled with this offer was that of two floors above the *Hospital* offices (at a rent of £150 per annum) for a club and restaurant? The club to be furnished and financed by the Co-operation, but open, on payment of a subscription, to all nurses? If the committee, upon consideration, did not think that the interests of the Co-operation would be served by accepting this offer, and if when, by Sir Henry's express wish, the nurses were circularized on the subject, they laughed to scorn the idea of offices at the West End, a club in the Strand, and a home away in the suburbs, as well they might? They expressed a strong wish for a club house and home of their own near the offices, and were of opinion that the committee would do wisely in expending on this object, not, be it noted, the "nurses' money," but the savings effected from the 7½ per cent. paid by them towards the office expenses, and on which, of course, they have no sort of claim.

It is interesting to follow the history of the vacant offices in the *Hospital* building. Being refused with thanks by the Nurses Co-operation, they were opened in 1897 with much flourish of trumpets by Sir Henry Burdett as a "Victoria Commemoration Club," having for secretaries, successively, Miss Helen Foggo-Thomson and Miss Carvosso, but even the royal flavour of this club failed to justify its existence, and in just over two years it was defunct. Perhaps Sir Henry Burdett will inform the public whether these surplus offices of his are now let to the League of Mercy, of which he is Treasurer for a substantial yearly consideration.

So much for the club. Meanwhile, the committee of the Nurses' Co-operation were endeavouring to find houses suitable for a residential home, near at hand, when the late Lady Howard de Walden made a most generous offer, through Miss Philippa Hicks, then Lady Superintendent, to give them the lease of some property of her own, and a sum towards the building. The scheme was, by her wish, not mentioned until the negotiations with the occupants of the houses were complete, but Miss Hicks was authorized to confer with the committee, and plans were prepared under the donor's personal instructions, the understanding being that these plans were to be submitted to the Committee of Management before the agreement was completed.

Unfortunately, at this stage the plans found their way into Sir Henry Burdett's hands, and, once there, he was apparently unwilling to part

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)