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Editorial.

A MATTER OF HONOUR.

OUR attention has been called to a matter concerning which there have been very frequent complaints, and which has not hitherto received in the nursing press the attention which it deserves. At a meeting of the Wallingford Board of Guardians, held on September 10th, it was reported that "on the representation of the Medical Officer on the report of the head nurse, the Master had suspended Assistant Nurse Lockley for incompetence through intoxication, and the General Purposes Committee had taken the matter into consideration and discharged her. It seems she was recommended as a clean, sober, competent officer, and Mr. Scott-Smith inquired whether the Board could not obtain redress from the medical man who gave her this character." Such a case as this occurs by no means infrequently, and whenever we have investigated the facts, we have invariably found that the so-called nurse had received no training whatsoever, but had obtained her position in a public institution, or in a private Nursing Home, solely on the recommendation of some medical practitioner or of some philan-

thropic lady. We know nothing of the case above referred to, beyond the newspaper report we have quoted, but we consider the Board of Guardians would have been well advised if they had called upon the medical man in question, for some explanation of his recommendation. Unfortunately for the Nursing profession and the public, private references as to character are, at present, both lightly given and easily accepted, and there is no means of obtaining redress if the character given proves to be absolutely untrustworthy. It is a mere matter of honour and good faith. We would point out to managers of institutions that no nursing testimonial can be regarded as satisfactory, unless it emanates from a recognised Hospital, and is officially signed by its Matron. And, on the other hand, we would earnestly urge on medical men that, considering the responsible duties which are entrusted to Nurses at the present day, too much care cannot be exercised in the giving of certificates or testimonials of character to them. In fact, all experienced medical men most cautiously avoid giving any testimonial of any kind, because it is impossible to foresee how such a testimonial may be utilised in the future.

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