

statement, as nobbling and wire-pulling are not our methods of conducting business. To be placed upon their "Index Expurgatorius" by the hon. officers of the R.B.N.A. will not keep us awake o' nights.—Ed.]

TRAINED OR UNTRAINED?

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."

DEAR MADAM,—I feel sure you will allow me a little of your valuable space to defend the Holt-Ockley system of cottage nurses. The question of whether they may fairly be described as "trained nurses" can most easily be answered by considering what kind of nursing they have replaced. Twenty years ago, when the system was started, the village "Gamp" was the only resource of the cottager. It would be impossible here to give details, but such facts as the absolute ignorance of antiseptics, the indiscriminate use of one sponge, the placing of a poultice on the unaffected lung (all facts within my own knowledge) will show what really "untrained" nursing is. Between such nursing and the Holt-Ockley system there is, indeed, a great gulf fixed. We do not pretend that our certificated monthly nurses, with their four or six months' training in the very poor parts of London, are fully trained in all branches of nursing, but we do say (and we are supported by the evidence of doctors, and by experience) that they are fully qualified to carry on the work they undertake. This work is not only nursing, but consists also in taking complete charge of the family as well as of the patient, cooking, care of children, &c. For such work a long residence in a hospital would inevitably unfit them. During the ten years that the writer has been Hon. Secretary, this branch has nursed upwards of 300 maternity cases without ever losing a case or receiving a complaint from a doctor. May I add that in view of the object we aim at—the alleviation of present suffering, the foundation of future health among those who, without this system, would be quite unable to secure any trained assistance—such jealousy as that displayed by your correspondent "Fair Play" seems strangely small.

Yours faithfully,

(Mrs.) F. B. DICKINS.

Tardebigge Vicarage, Bromsgrove.

March 7th, 1904.

[This is the question at issue:—Is a woman of the industrial class, who has had no hospital training, but has had four or six months' experience of maternity work in a district, entitled to be described as a "trained nurse"? We think not. That such a woman may be a most useful cottage "help," taking the mother's domestic duties, and attending to her when laid by, we do not deny; but she is not a "trained" nurse in the universally-accepted interpretation of the word. Why, therefore, should she be encouraged by philanthropic persons to assume a virtue which she has not? Why are not these useful workers—cooks, cleaners, caretakers in one—given a name to which they have a right? Why does not the Holt-Ockley Association call them what they are—cottage helps? Trained nurses they are not.

We see nothing that savours of "jealousy" in "Fair Play's" excellent letter which appeared last week. She does not approve of skilled and unskilled nursing labour competing without let or hindrance in the open market. We sympathise with her point of

view. So would our correspondent if she had spent ten arduous years perfecting her knowledge of nursing the sick in the best hospitals.—Ed.]

NO INSULT INTENDED.

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."

MADAM,—I seldom see your journal, but an extract from your last print has been brought to my notice. The following is a copy:—"At the Quarterly Court of Governors held at the London Hospital on Wednesday, it was reported that the House Committee had determined to oppose State Registration for Trained Nurses. In the absence of Mr. Sydney Holland, the chairman, Mr. Hale, was unable to explain the reasons for this action upon the part of the Committee."

I take this, the earliest opportunity, to write to you to say that the above report is untrue and without the slightest foundation.

At the meeting of the Governors on Wednesday, when I was in the chair, the report, having been duly read, and I having made some observations upon the work of the hospital during the past three months, was put to the meeting and carried unanimously; not a single question of any kind whatever was addressed to me. I consider the report in your journal was a direct insult to me, and must request that this communication be inserted in your next issue.

Yours truly,

JOHN H. HALE.

[Mr. J. H. Hale admits that he did not give an explanation to the Governors of the serious and important step which the London Hospital Committee have decided to take in opposing nursing reforms. We are of opinion that, as chairman of the meeting, it was his duty to do so. Our informant in criticising this omission conveyed the impression that Mr. Hale was questioned on the matter; we, of course, accept Mr. Hale's statement that this was not the case.—Ed.]

Comments and Replies.

M. C. F., Grange-over-Sands.—We are obliged for your letter, but regret that we have not space to insert appointments which are solely connected with midwifery as apart from nursing.

Tired Pro.—You could not do better than go to the London Shoe Company (116, New Bond Street). Their shoes are most comfortable and satisfactory in wear as well as moderate in price.

Arrangements for the Berlin Congress.

Miss Mollett, Matron, Royal South Hants Hospital, Southampton, is making arrangements to conduct a party of twenty to Berlin in June next, to attend the International Congress of Women, and the meeting of the International Council of Nurses. Those wishing for further information should apply to Miss Mollett.

Notice.

OUR PRIZE PUZZLE.

Rules for competing for the Pictorial Puzzle Prize will be found on Advertisement page viii.

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