

allowed to accept presents of clothes or money from the patients' friends"—(I quote from memory, but believe this is the correct wording)—shows the kind of footing upon which these authorities must stand to the nurses sent out by them. Anything more degrading to a self-respecting nurse one can hardly imagine. Of course, we quite understand that the alteration of this regrettable system of sending out partially trained nurses by the "London" Hospital must of necessity mean a big drop in their income, and if the Hospital is still heavily encumbered, of course one can but sympathise, but Mr. Holland should scarcely hold it up as a subject to be proud of. It is, after all, under the present arrangement, the nurses and the public who suffer, not the institution.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

(Mrs.) W. F. HADFIELD.

Malvern.

THE HISTORY OF NURSING.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I think nurses all over the world will be proud and delighted that the splendid book, "A History of Nursing," the first volume of which was so ably reviewed in last week's issue of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, is the result of work, and has issued from the pens of two trained nurses. Surely, a profession which includes such erudite scholars has a right to legal status and self-government. No man could have written this book—the letter might have been there, but not the *spirit*. I sincerely endorse your hope that "A History of Nursing" may be found in the library of every training school, and would suggest it might be included in the text books required to be studied by every probationer for examination. It would give them some sense of the personal responsibility of each in maintaining the highest standards of work and conduct. No doubt, also, it will figure largely in the prize lists for probationers, and, indeed, for girls generally. Of course, as soon as I can afford a guinea I shall buy it for myself. Looking forward to next week's review of the second volume, and gratefully thanking you for making this great work known to the nursing profession in Ireland.

I remain,

A VERY APPRECIATIVE READER.

Cork.

X-RAYS AND OTHER TESTS FOR DEATH.

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

MADAM,—The interesting discovery of M. Vaillant, referred to by "A Cremationist" in your instructive Journal of January 4th, may be useful in the diagnosis of normal cases of life and death, but what is wanted for the prevention of premature burial is a ready scientific test, capable of universal application, which would with absolute certainty distinguish between trance, catalepsy, and other forms of suspended animation and real death.

It cannot be too strongly insisted on and widely known that the only trustworthy proof of death is

the advent of putrefactive decomposition (the late Sir Henry Thompson, F.R.C.S., etc.). The Rev. Dr. G. B. Geniesse, of Rome, who has translated into several languages and published a treatise entitled "La Mort Réelle et la Mort Apparente," in a letter to the present writer says:—"Very likely you have heard of the new sign of death proposed by Icard in his book, 'Le signe de la Mort réelle en l'absence du Médecin de la réaction sulphytrique.'" I was already acquainted with that sign secretly. The proofs of Icard do not convince me. So many others have proposed signs as certain, and it was afterwards proved that they were mistaken. We must fear very much the action of auto-suggestion in these matters. A friend of mine communicated a case narrated by Senator (Berliner Klinische Wochensche Tobey, s.p. 214, 1868), which destroys the doctrine of Icard. He had found that case by accident in another book abridged from the Berlin journal. I have written for the complete article. It is necessary that many other physicians try the new sign of Icard on all kinds of sick and dying people, which was not sufficiently done by Icard. Besides, even supposing that the sign is certain, all difficulties are not then removed; the paper becomes black a little before the appearance of the green colouration of the abdomen, but we know that this colouration in many cases only shows itself after two, three, four, five, eight, and ten days, and at present laws and customs do not permit to await such a long time before the burial. The sign being proved, difficulties are diminished, but not destroyed."

Dr. Icard's fluorescein test was made public in 1897, about ten years ago; yet I am unaware that the doctor has received the 25,000 francs offered by the French Academy of Medicine for the discovery of a simple and certain means of recognising whether a body is dead or only apparently so. If medical practitioners would adopt the signs and proofs of death prepared by the late Sir B. W. Richardson, M.D., F.R.S., and apply them in every case, the dangers of premature burial would be greatly, if not entirely, removed. Thanking you for your kindness,

I am, Madam,

Your obedient servant,

JAS. R. WILLIAMSON.

100, Chedington Road, Upper Edmonton.

Comments and Replies.

Social Worker, Birmingham.—Dr. J. B. Paton, of Nottingham, is the author of six booklets on social questions of the day, to which we have pleasure in calling attention. For many years Dr. Paton has been known as a keen social reformer, and he has done much by pen and otherwise to promote schemes for social improvement. "Counter Attractions to the Publichouse," in which Dr. Paton aims at showing how the drinking habits of the people may be changed, would answer your purpose. The series is issued by Messrs. James Clarke and Co., Fleet Street, E.C., but can be had separately.

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