

the annual meeting, supported by the Medical Hon. Secretary, Mr. Fardon, of the Middlesex Hospital, not only declared but insisted that the letter in question was never registered. The Post Office certificate of its registration was handed to the Chairman, and, after examining it carefully, he informed the meeting that this referred only to an express delivery of the letter, although the form is headed "Certificate of the posting of a *Registered* postal packet." The Chairman, therefore, ruled that the proposed vote of censure upon himself and his co-officials could not be discussed at the meeting; and once more freedom of speech and criticism have been denied to the members of the Royal British Nurses' Association. We are glad, however, to believe that this is the last occasion upon which such proceedings will be possible. Englishmen and Englishwomen are very patient and long suffering, but their liberties are as dear to them to-day as they were to their forefathers, and any attempt to deprive them of their legal rights inevitably arouses the most determined opposition. The matters at issue between the six officials on the one side, and a large number of the members of the Royal British Nurses' Association, on the other side, involve questions of the highest constitutional importance, and they can only be decided now in a Court of Justice.

International Homœopathic Congress.

THIS Congress, which meets once in every five years, held its meetings during the present week in the Queen's Hall. The President's reception took place on Monday evening. The proceedings were varied by vocal and instrumental music, a demonstration of the Röntgen photography, and an exhibition of the nursing models from the London Homœopathic Hospital, which formed such a striking feature of the recent Nursing Exhibition at St. Martin's Town Hall, and those which in 1893, obtained a Medal and Diploma at the Chicago World's Fair. Besides the British practitioners, a large number of American and Continental physicians were present at the various meetings this week, and papers on medical and surgical subjects were read and discussed.

Statistical Report of Working Hours.*

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IN preparing this report the chief difficulty lay in getting at the exact number of hours on duty. It seemed to be demanding a great deal of unnecessary information to ask when the Nurses had breakfast, how long a time was allowed for dinner, and whether the Nurses came off duty to supper and returned to their wards, or whether, in all instances, the supper came after leaving the wards for the night. Statistics which are not complete and accurate are of but little value, and while it may seem straining at a point to even allude to the amount of time a Nurse is expected to give to the care of her room, it is not fair to ignore it entirely. It may be but one half-hour daily, but it is work. It seems small, but in reviewing the whole day's work it counts. In this report it has not been counted.

In those schools in which the very shortest hours are adopted, Nurses are employed at least nine hours a day, at work which taxes the physical strength, even of the strong, in no small degree—of the moderately strong to the utmost. After nine hours of hard physical labour the Nurse comes off duty—to what?—to rest?—to get out of her uniform and away from the trying atmosphere of the sick-room and into the fresh air? Not at all; but to go to her room, which may perhaps be shared with a stranger, to try to bring the energies of a tired mind, dominated by a tired body, to bear upon whatever problems her theoretical work may present. Having thus taken up her hour, or hours, supposed to be for rest and recreation, are her evenings free? We find that they are not. For here a class, or a lecture, or possibly two of each—or perhaps relief work in a ward while a member of another class is at lecture, occupies her, and thus two or three, or it may be four evenings in a week, are taken up. If this be the picture of a day in a school in which the work is thought to be easy, what must be that in those schools where the working day is not 9, but 11, 12, or 13 hours long, and where study and attendance at lectures or classes is still compulsory.

Now, what are Training Schools? Are they charitable Institutions? Is it a condition of employer and employé? When we read in

* Paper read at the Convention of American Superintendents of Training Schools at Philadelphia, February 12th, 1896.

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