

against the moral character of the Nurses. And on the Chairman asking her if she had been required to do duties which did not usually fall to Nurses, she replied she did not think so. In fact, she was getting to like the work better now, and would be willing to withdraw her resignation. The Medical Officer also produced a series of answers to questions put to her by himself, and these also showed that there was no foundation in the allegations.

WITH regard to the charges made against them by Dr. Thompson, forty-eight Nurses have written to the Guardians inquiring whether the matter was to end by simply asking for an apology. They considered that they had a right to a public apology, and that if Dr. Thompson could not substantiate his charges he must be compelled to withdraw them.

In the face of all this, it was very naturally decided to forward a copy of these admissions to the father, and to ask him to apologise, which we hope he will do. The resignation of Miss Thompson has doubtless, ere this, been accepted.

EQUALLY vague accusations are levelled against the treatment of Hospital Nurses by Mr. Hamilton Fox in the *Westminster Gazette*, who says:—"My wife for four years was a Nurse in a London Hospital, and her accounts of what she suffered there are heartrending. The strain upon her constitution has been so intense that its lifelong traces must remain. Her hours on duty were fourteen one day and twelve the next, the work grievously hard, made more so by the addition of scrubbing and cleaning. Her food was at times so bad that she lived chiefly on dry bread, and as to comfort in the so-called 'Nurses' Home,' there was none!"

Now, we do not know in which Hospital Mrs. Fox was subjected to treatment resembling penal servitude, but we do not hesitate to say that if she felt the treatment to be such as her husband describes, it was plainly her duty, in the interests of humanity, and on behalf of her suffering fellow-creatures, to have brought the facts before the authorities, even if she did not feel called on to make such a state of things more public. In neglecting to take some such step, we cannot but think this lady showed herself as careless of the sufferings of her fellow Nurses, as the body of management she accuses could have been guilty of.

It has been decided to form a Nursing Association for Suffolk, for providing cottage Nurses

for people unable to engage the services of trained Nurses. An influential committee has been formed, and it is proposed to carry out the scheme on the lines of the Lincolnshire Nursing Association. These Associations are unquestionably the greatest possible boon to the poor; the only weak point connected with all of them is, that they call the workers "Nurses," instead of "cottage helps," or some other title that would correctly describe them. As Dr. Crowfoot, of Beccles, pointed out at the meeting, "what they wanted were 'handy' women who could make themselves useful in the house as well as in the sick room." And this is in truth what the Nurses of these co-operative district Associations are, in spite of the six months' "training" that is thought so much of. There ought to be as clear a demarcation between the trained professional Nurse and the lay Nurse, as there is between the clergyman and the Scripture reader or district visitor.

THE Totnes Board of Guardians appear to need instruction in Nursing ethics. At the last meeting of the Board one of them attempted to reprove a Head Nurse for objecting to himself and a lady Guardian from entering the Lying-in Ward. The lady Guardian made a joke about the Nurse objecting to "him taking in germs. Fortunately the Chairman supported the Nurse and thought her action justified, and it appeared, on enquiry, that the Nurse did not forbid the lady to enter, but only disapproved of her doing so.

Another of the Guardians thought they would have less trouble if they reduced the Nursing staff to two, but the project was defeated by the Medical Officer, who, the Chairman said, "gave a sort of threat to report the Staff insufficient if they did so."

But the more serious matter that the Totnes Guardians need enlightenment on, is the suitable duties of the Nurses. It appears that the Nurses have to admit people into the house, to bathe able-bodied women, tramps and others, and also to search the inmates. "They were not," the Head Nurse said, "above looking after tramps, but it was not the duty of Nurses."

In these circumstances, which the Board, after full discussion, refused to rectify or improve, there was no other course open to Miss Gill, Secretary of the Workhouse Infirmity Nursing Association, but to write that if the Board would not consent to alter the system by which the Assistant Nurses were required to

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)