

this instance of Nurses neglecting to fulfil their contract is not a solitary one, and we are glad to see that the question of their liability under such circumstances has been tested.

So far as we are able to form an opinion, the Nurses had no serious ground of complaint as to the way in which the contract was carried out by the Board, and therefore we are in sympathy with that body in its action in this matter. It had apparently ample justification for legal proceedings, and we do not see how the defendant Nurses could have hoped that the decision would be in their favour. Indeed, had this been so we should have viewed the decision with regret.

We are afraid that Nurses do not always regard the signing of a contract—to give a certain term of service for advantages received—in the serious light in which it should undoubtedly be observed; or that they consider that, having so agreed, and received certain advantages under these conditions, they are acting exceedingly dishonourably in breaking their contract. The present lesson therefore is one which such Nurses will do well to remember.

The Nurse in question went out to Johannesburg at the end of 1895, the Hospital Board paying her first-class passage to the Cape, and her first-class railway fare to Johannesburg. She was provided with uniform, washing, board and lodging, and a salary at the rate of £55 a year. She worked from January to October, 1896, when she broke her contract. Mr. Frank Evans, the Secretary of the Hospital, stated that it cost £70 11s. 3d. to get each Nurse out. It will therefore be seen that although this cost will now be defrayed by the Nurses, yet the Board will still have to incur the expense and inconvenience of supplying their place. Under these circumstances it would, in our opinion, be a failure of duty on the part of a Board entrusted with public funds if it did not dispute the right of Nurses to accept so much at its hands, and then to deprive it of the equivalent which it has every right to expect. It is bound to consider the welfare of the Institution, and the economical administration of public funds. The first duty of a Hospital Board is to the public, and it is the general and not individual interests which it is bound to consider. We congratulate the Board therefore upon its action in this matter.

To Nurses we would say—Be very careful to make full inquiries before signing a con-

tract, but when signed keep it honourably. Do not emigrate to the Colonies, unless you are prepared for discomforts, and ready to grapple with difficulties and disorganisation, which must be overcome before the Nursing of the sick in a new country can become efficient. It is manifestly absurd to expect in the interior of Africa the same appliances of civilisation which are to be found in the heart of the metropolis. Nurses who are not endowed with a plentiful stock of "patience, and abnegation of self, and devotion to others" are out of place as Nursing pioneers, and, indeed, their services could be well dispensed with in our Hospitals at home. However that may be, only those who are tried and proved should, in our opinion, be chosen for foreign service, and we can suggest no better method of selection of such Nurses than to entrust the careful consideration of their credentials to the Matrons' Council.

How, How, How!

THE Trained Nurse! The dailies, the weeklies, the monthlies—she is the burning question of the hour—in the columns of them all she is being discussed.—Mrs. Watson, "an old Nurse," deploras her modernity in the *National Review*; and, by way of reply, Miss Nancy Paul, with the best of intentions, "damns with faint praise" in the same periodical.—Lady Priestley makes one blush for one's calling in the *Nineteenth Century*.—Mr. Malcolm Morris trembles before the "New Nurse" in the editorial columns of the *Practitioner*, and quotes copiously from the American press in support of his views. The Editor of *St. James' Gazette* points out the dexterity with which the Nurse "arrives at the altar" by the "new cut"; and, above all this clamour, the strong, logical, convincing views expressed by Mrs. Alec Tweedie in the current issue of the *Queen*, in an article headed "District Nursing—Cottage Helps" alone rings true. She alone of all the voluble critics *sympathises with the Trained Nurse*. She is the only one, therefore, who grasps the real significance of her economic condition, and suggests a remedy. We hope Mrs. Alec Tweedie, who is herself the daughter and sister of eminent physicians, will continue her interest in this vexed question of the "status" of the Trained Nurse, and will use her brilliant abilities to place the truth concerning them before the public.

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