

training, will proceed to exercise her matured powers in some direction or another amongst the sick. It may be on—

“A bold peasantry, their country's pride,
Who, once *destroyed*, can never be supplied,”

in some “sweet Auburn” of our native land; or amongst the sick poor of some favoured parish of one of our great provincial cities; or on some hapless relative, who, trusting to the immense Hospital experience of the gifted tyro, trusts herself in her hands in preference to any regular Nurse! But what need to multiply instances? The moral of them is all the same, viz.—that disaster *must* follow incapacity sooner or later. Perchance when the light of many bright young lives is quenched, or the loved bread-winners of many humble homes are laid for ever low, the public may be made to realise the extent of this growing evil in its midst. On whose head then shall the blame of wrong-doing fall? Not on incapacity that was true to itself, but upon those Committees of Hospitals who manufactured incapacity, stamped it with their image and superscription as it were, and sent it forth as a marketable commodity. It is a penal offence to utter base coin; is it any less penal *morally* to utter “counterfeit” Nurses, who may be passed in exchange for precious human lives? The authorities who sanction these things betray innocent blood for gold; they are false to the trust reposed in them for the welfare of the sick, the helpless and the poor, whose interests they are bound to defend. They are doing a wrong to the skilful loyal women who have served them faithfully and long. They are bringing discredit upon the art of Nursing, whose honour they, of all men, should be foremost to uphold. And for what end? To add to the funds of the Hospital—“merely a matter of business.” Doubtful expediency—to tide over a financial difficulty by creating a moral wrong. The public needs only to have the fallacy and the peril of this new-fangled system of short service Nurses brought before it to condemn it utterly. Within and without the Hospitals it is fraught with mischief. Does this reckless system of manufactured incapacity prevail in any of the ordinary transactions of life? I can recall no handicraft acquired by a three months apprenticeship; I can think of no position of trust and responsibility confided to man or woman upon the strength of a three months' term of service. Would our railway directors entrust the charge of an express train to a driver of three months' experience? Are human lives of less account than human enterprises, that our Hospital authorities should contravene every principle of common sense and common humanity, when they sanction a pernicious system of short service Nurses opposed to both?

MARION HUMFREY.

NURSING ECHOES.

*** *Communications (duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith) are especially invited for these columns.*

WE hear from South Africa that Miss Bessie Smythe has been appointed Matron of the Barberton Hospital, in the Transvaal Gold Fields. This lady was trained in the Kimberley Hospital, and was for several years there afterwards in charge of the Accident Ward of sixty beds. She then worked for a short time independently in Dublin, taking private cases for well-known Surgeons. She returned to the land of sunshine before the English winter set in, and all South African Nurses will be glad to think that one so well-known and much loved and respected has taken permanent work amongst them once again.

I AM asked to remind Members of the British Nurses' Association of the Meeting to be held tomorrow, Friday, evening, at 11, Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, at eight p.m., when Dr. Octavius Sturges will read a paper on “Doctors and Nurses.” Most of my readers know that Dr. Sturges is the Senior Physician to the Westminster Hospital, and takes the keenest interest in all Nursing matters. It is reported that Mr. Warrington Haward, the well-known Surgeon to St. George's Hospital, will take the Chair, so that a very interesting Meeting may safely be prophesied. I only hope that the Nurses present will show a more vocal interest in the proceedings at future meetings, than they have hitherto done.

IT must be very discouraging to the celebrated readers who have taken the trouble to write papers for the Association, to find that so few members arise to discuss them. Mr. Editor showed me a pile of letters which he has received from ladies expressing most shrewd opinions on Mrs. Bedford Fenwick's paper, for only a few of which he can possibly find space; whereas if they had been enunciated at the meeting, they would have probably encouraged others to speak, and certainly, I imagine, been much appreciated. I certainly think the members of the British Nurses' Association owe distinct duties for the privileges they receive. Everyone who can do so should not only go to the Meetings, organised at the great trouble and expense all Meetings involve, but should individually show her interest by asking questions on the subject of the paper. There is no need for them to make a set speech. A single question would be quite sufficient, and would probably lead to others, and entail further explanations, which would greatly enhance the interest of the subject and the liveliness of the Meeting.

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