

Legal Matters.

An Ideal Chairman.

SHERRIFF *v.* POTTER.

TRAINED nurses, who have seen in the papers the account of the action brought by Christina Sherriff, a "professional nurse," of 11, Shandwick Place, Edinburgh, against John A. Traill, C.A., executor of Lieutenant-Colonel Potter, of the Edinburgh City Volunteer Artillery, of Newlandburn House, Gorebridge, must, we think, desire that they may be protected, by legislative measures, from persons who bring such discredit and shame upon their profession. It is for the sake of placing on record the scandals which occur, in order to prove, when a parliamentary inquiry takes place, the justice of the claim of nurses to purge their profession from these persons, that we record the details of these repulsive proceedings week by week in the *NURSING RECORD*. Miss Sherriff brought an action for £3000 damages for alleged breach of promise and seduction. She stated that in June, 1893, she was engaged to attend the late Colonel Potter, and in the November following accompanied him to Perth, as he still required trained attendance. At this time he solemnly promised to marry her as soon as they got home. After that they occupied the same room. In May they returned to Newlandburn House, where she was placed in full charge of Colonel Potter's house and servants, and in all respects lived as his wife, until June, 1896, when she was ejected from his house by the coachman and a policeman. As Colonel Potter refused to go through a formal marriage with her, or to make suitable compensation, she brought the action. After the action was raised, Colonel Potter died, and the present defender was sisted in his place.

For the defence it was stated that Colonel Potter denied having promised to marry the nurse, or that he seduced her. As nurse, or housekeeper, she was allowed to sit at his table, and drive out with him. In June, 1893, he had a return of malarial fever and liver complaint, contracted abroad, followed by an attack of delirium tremens. The chief duty of the nurse was to restrain him in the use of alcohol. She was stated to have plied him with drink, and thus to have obtained great influence over him. She was ejected from his house after quarrelling with and assaulting him. He admitted his immoral relations with her. Miss Sherriff accepted a settlement of £100, and each party was required to pay its own expenses.

We think that it is needless for us to point out to the public the necessity which exists for them to protect themselves from the possibility of admitting to their houses, in times of sickness, such persons as Christina Sherriff.

THE lectures to the nurses at the London Hospital which were recently delivered by the chairman, Mr. Sydney Holland, are very pleasant reading, and deserve a wide circulation. We do not see why all the good things they contain should be the exclusive property of the "London" nurses, and we are sure that Mr. Holland would not wish it, as he preaches the duty of unselfishness, we therefore note for the benefit of our readers, and advise them to notice also, that copies of these lectures may be obtained from Messrs. Whitehead, Morris & Co., Limited, 9, Fenchurch Street, E.C.

For the lectures are well worth purchasing and carefully reading. They literally teem with "plums." Wise, earnest, witty, and pregnant sayings abound, and many of Mr. Holland's expressive phrases will, we feel sure, remain in the memory and become household words with nurses who once are acquainted with them. Before we comment upon anything else let us at once express our conviction that Mr. Holland should have been a bishop, and that he would have worn a cope and mitre, and carried a pastoral staff with distinction. We are very glad that he has not chosen the Church as his vocation in life, for in that case the hospital world would have been the poorer, but Mr. Holland's picture of an ideal nurse and his views of the sacredness of a nurse's calling, both go to prove that the mainspring of his own life is the Divine example which inspired the Apostles. For this reason, therefore, we say that Mr. Holland would make a worthy successor of the Apostles at the present day.

We notice, with much satisfaction, the stress which is laid upon the necessity of the right kind of character as a fundamental basis upon which to work, if the ideal nurse is to be produced at the end of her training. It is impossible to "pour out of a pitcher what is not in it," and though a certain technical skill, and manual dexterity, may be acquired in the course of training, the virtues of sympathy, unselfishness, and love of the human race, are plants of slow growth, which need to be cultivated from early days, if they are to bear fruit in adult life. The selection of suitable probationers, with a view to character, and the weeding out of the unsuitable, are, therefore, points of the utmost importance.

Mr. Holland is desirous of great things from the nurses of the London Hospital, and is by no means satisfied with an average nurse. "Do not, I beg of you," he says, "be satisfied with being an average nurse—a 'she'll do.'" That is the answer I get sometimes from a Sister, when I ask how Probationer So-and-so is getting on. "Oh! she'll do." We want something better than 'she'll do's,' here." At the same time we must candidly confess

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