

discipline, and, we go even further, to demoralization, amongst the workers. It places the House Surgeon in a totally false position, and one which we are quite sure his own mother would be the first to resent, in the domestic sphere. It is, moreover, extremely undignified for professional men to busy themselves about pettifogging domestic details, and to dictate on these matters to experienced persons of the opposite sex. In our opinion no woman should accept the position of Matron to a Hospital who lacks the firmness of character, and determination of will to realize her responsibilities, and where a woman finds that she is unable to make the Committee of an institution realize the vital importance of defining most clearly her own position and that of the other officials, we are inclined to think that her special talents do not lie in the direction of holding a post in which firmness and determination will be constantly requisitioned.

THE CRUELTY OF CRAMMING.

THE sad death of Miss Harriet Hughes Hoare, the nurse of the Eridge Branch of the North Sussex Diamond Jubilee Benefit Nursing Association, has caused considerable sensation at Eridge, where the nurse was much liked. There is considerable mystery surrounding the death, the body having been found in a stream, and a handkerchief, saturated with carbolic acid, marked with the nurse's name, about two feet away. The Coroner has now adjourned the inquest in order that a post mortem examination may be made. It appears that the deceased nurse had just been through a course of six months' training at Plaistow, during which time she had passed the examination of the London Obstetrical Society. There is no doubt that she felt the strain of the work greatly, and when she saw her sister she talked constantly about the coming examination. She also wrote to Miss Williamson, the secretary of the Eridge Association, complaining of the severity of the work. As a result, Miss Williamson wrote to Miss Twining, the Superintendent of the Home at Plaistow, asking if the nurse could come home for a month, and return later to complete her training, or, if not, requesting that she should be looked after, and given lighter work. Miss Twining replied that unless there was really a danger of breaking down, she could not possibly let Nurse Hoare come home until the time of her training was ended.

The point brought out by this sad death is undoubtedly the terrible strain which is entailed when women, in a few months, and with frequently little general or special education, go through a course of training and attempt to pass an examination which even fully-trained and well-educated women find quite as much as they can manage in this period of time. We are unable to say what Miss Hoare's previous experience had been, but it is certainly the case that many persons pass the examination of the London Obstetrical Society after only three months' experience in a Maternity Hospital. It is only possible for women who do not know one bone, or one organ of the body, from another to do this by a process of cramming and parrot-like learning which, while taxing their powers of endurance to the uttermost, still leaves them, in our opinion, far from competent to undertake the practical work which they will be called upon to perform, when they leave their training school armed with an important certificate.

That Nurse Hoare felt the strain of her practical and theoretical work terribly is evident, and we can only hope that this sad case may point to the necessity of both lengthening the period of training for the L. O. S. certificate, and also of the passing of a regulation by the London Obstetrical Society requiring candidates who enter for it to have had some general training, in order that they may not have to perform well nigh impossible feats of learning in a few weeks.

A DANGEROUS DRUNKARD.

THE death of the man Barisch from Indian plague at Vienna, is a most unwelcome instance of the danger which may attend the prosecution of bacteriological observations. This man was caretaker of the room in which plague bacilli were isolated at the General Public Hospital, and also attended to and fed the animals used for experimental purposes. It is a grave reflection upon those responsible, that this important office was entrusted to a man who is now admitted to have been an habitual drunkard, and it is probable that he became infected while feeding the animals. In the interests of public safety we consider that those charged with the administration of this Hospital should take immediate steps to ensure that only trustworthy persons should be permitted to perform such dangerous duties.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)