

nor apology offered to them. The resignation of the ladies who helped to make the Association is not "received," it is "*order-r-r-ed* to be accepted." "Hobson's Choice" is taken with characteristic lack of dignity!

THAT under such circumstances, the officials should condescend to beg for five shillings from ladies who repudiate all further connection with the Association, might have been expected from those who have cheated Matrons and nurses out of definitely promised rights and privileges.

"G. A. LEIGH," is, we observe, still "Acting Secretary of the Corporation"; in fact this "G. A. Leigh" has absolutely no official connection with the Corporation at all, as she has not been legally appointed. "G. A. Leigh," is, we are informed, connected with the Pension Fund, and has been "loaned" to the British Nurses' Association. It would be interesting to learn what is the *quid pro quo* for this little Stock Exchange deal.

A CHARTERED CHARITY.

THE Hon. Officers are now busy organizing a charity entertainment to bolster up their thriftless management of the Association. This we learn will take place under Royal Patronage some time in December, and nurses with a sense of professional dignity, will again have cause to congratulate themselves that they have severed their connection with this "Chartered Charity."

No doubt the occasion will be largely utilised by the wives and daughters of the medical members eager for social advancement, and the usual scramble amongst them for the honour of bombarding the Royal President with bouquets will be bitterly contested. It is to be hoped, however, that the successful *bouquetière* will this time pay for the posey.

Sunderland Nurses' Home.

ON Saturday last, the new Nurses' Home in Murton Street, Sunderland—the home of the Sunderland District Nursing Association—which is affiliated with the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for Nurses—was opened by the Marchioness of Londonderry, President of the Association.

The Mayor (Alderman W. Bruce) extended a hearty welcome to Lady Londonderry, and said that the four nurses at present at work in connection with the Association were really overworked and now that they had got the home furnished, they must consider the question of adding to the staff.

Lady Londonderry, whose keen interest in nursing matters is well known, expressed in an excellent speech her pleasure at being present on the occasion, and spoke warmly of the value of skilled nursing in the homes of the poor.

The Work of Midwives and Maternity Nurses.—Its Need and Organization in Rural Districts.*

BY LADY LAURA RIDDING.

I FEAR that few English villages can vie with the little Italian mountain village, where the reply to the inquiry of its English discoverer, the solitary forerunner of an army of invading spinster ladies, when she was asked if the place was healthy, was given enthusiastically by the landlady of the inn: "Indeed, signora, it is! Nobody is ever ill here except in childbed"; and then she rapidly added, fearful lest this admission might detract from the charms of her paradise: "But the air is excellent for that also! Nobody ever dies here in childbirth." In England no village probably exists that can boast of such an absence of illness. If every one else can show a clean bill of health, there remain always a few aged folk whose sufferings and infirmities need the alleviations of careful nursing, to whom a trained nurse is a messenger of comfort. "I had rather see your face than a five-pun' note!" said the possessor of a very "bad leg" to a village nurse on her return after a month's absence. Infantine complaints, chronic illnesses, casualties caused by chills, burns, accidents, fits, and fractures occur occasionally in every village—most of them capable of being prevented from developing into dangerous illnesses if properly taken in hand at once, but which mistreatment and delay in calling in the doctor have frequently aggravated into a fatal condition. No one knows better than the country medical man the number of trivial cases which develop into grave ones for want of intelligent treatment at their beginning, or the number of deaths and of chronic invalids resulting from the absence of proficient nursing. With regard to medical and surgical requirements villages suffer from the same evils, whilst possessing none of their antidotes, as towns. The village has its ignorant quacks and wise-women as well as the town, but its ambulance aids, its dispensary, its hospital, its medical men are distant miles away. The village shop provides patent medicines and laudanum for the babies, but the chemists' appliances and drugs lie at the end of a railway journey.

It is to supplement this lack of helpers, so far as in her lies, that the village nurse exists. And therefore, though she is primarily a *Maternity Nurse*, she is of little use unless, besides having acquired sufficient knowledge and experience to pass the examination of the London Obstetrical Society, she has also been trained sufficiently in district nursing to be able to render first aid in accidents, to dress wounds, to poultice, to possess an elementary knowledge of the rudiments of sick

* A paper read before the Conference of the National Union of Women Workers, 1898.

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