

1892, during which two members of the medical staff threatened resignation unless the suggestions in a report made by them were carried out, and which embodied a system of management which the Matron could not conscientiously adopt, and which compelled her resignation. Now, we are of opinion that if these tactics of the medical men, which amount to intimidation both of the Matron and the Committee, are adopted upon any future occasion when there is difference of opinion upon nursing affairs, then the Committee will do well to accept such resignations. Moreover, we hope that the Committee will intimate to the medical staff; as a whole, that hospital etiquette must be maintained, and that they have no right of personal interference between the head of the nursing department and the nursing staff. If a Matron fails in her duty, or is incapable of performing it, just complaints should be made officially by the medical staff to the Committee, who alone have a right to adjudicate in the manner. Personal interference, and domination of the medical staff in affairs nursing—beyond the treatment of the sick—is bound to lead to disorganization in a hospital. We hope Sir Savile Crossley, the President of the Lowestoft Hospital, will keep this point well in mind.

* * *

A CORRESPONDENT at Devizes sends us the enclosed account, taken from the local press, of a collection made on behalf of the Hospital:—

“THE CANVASS OF THE FAIR.

“The annual canvass of the Fair by young ladies on behalf of the Hospital was made yesterday. The collectors, several of whom, assisted in the work last year, were, as usual, attired in the matronly costume of a hospital nurse—a pointed indication of the object of their mission. They energetically plied themselves to their task, and if any person escaped their vigilance it was only due to lack of staff. They were oblivious to any unpleasant sarcasm, which, happily, was not frequent, and never forgot to remind those of an apathetic turn of mind that it was the Hospital and not themselves that they sought to benefit. The “nurses” started out in the morning and continued their exertions till about eight o’clock.”

* * *

OUR correspondent, who, we understand, has written to Mayor of Devizes on the subject, gives the following reasons for her objection to this use of uniform:—“It looked to me a caricature and desecration of a dress that should be worn seriously and thoughtfully, by those whose profession it is to attend the sick and

dying. Time was when there was no greater protection than a nurse’s uniform, however lonely the road, or dark the night. That time is, I fear, fast passing away, and very soon a nurse’s attire will be made a laughing stock for the thoughtless. Ladies now allow their nurse-maids to wear it, female burglars and swindlers of all sorts wear it. Worse even than this, it is worn for immoral purposes in many of our large towns. At present there is no law to protect nurses who have a legal right to wear it. By legal right, I mean women who have trained for their profession in a recognized training school. I trust the day is coming when the law will protect us. The other day a man was prosecuted for acting in a soldier’s coat. They do worse things than that in a nurse’s uniform, and no one interferes.”

* * *

OUR correspondent, who asks the Mayor, in his official capacity, to prevent this masquerading in uniform from taking place another year has our entire sympathy. It is by individual action on the part of nurses who desire to uphold the honour of their profession that these abuses will be rectified.

* * *

It is refreshing to find a mother who concerns herself with the conditions of labour to which her daughter is subjected as a probationer. It is not uncommon for fathers to acquaint themselves as to the length of time which their sons are required to work, but too frequently parents are only too glad to get rid of their responsibilities with regard to their daughters, and make no enquiry concerning their hours on duty. Owing to the publicity which has been given to the abuses which formerly existed, improvements have been made in many hospitals, yet the hours of work required of the nurse, as a rule, are far too long, and no man would submit to them. Nurses—and their parents—appear afraid to speak, because, if they do so, they are told that plenty of other women can be found to take their places, and so they suffer. The following is the letter to which we refer:—

To the Editor of the *Liverpool Courier*.

SIR,—Is it not surprising that men can meet to raise such a storm in a teacup over such a trivial matter as a few words spoken inadvertently by a woman who has so ably done the work of such an institution as Miss Stuart has controlled for so many years, when a real grievance lies at their feet?

Suppose that committee turned its attention to the nurses already on Miss Stuart’s staff and asked how many hours those nurses worked, and how many wards and patients those girls have

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)