

We have received a most interesting letter from Mr. Colin Campbell, of Saddleworth, referring to our last week's remarks, under "Moans about Midwives," in which he informs us he is in favour of State Registration of real nurses. It will be remembered that Mr. Colin Campbell seconded some years ago a resolution proposed by Dr. Bedford Fenwick, at a general meeting of the British Medical Association, in favour of Registration of Trained Nurses, which was passed by a large majority, but since which time no action has been taken by the Association upon it. Mr. Campbell is a moving spirit on the Parliamentary Bills Committee and Council of the B.M.A., and has consistently opposed the Registration of three months' midwives, whom he finds often develop into "fraudulent nurses." Sooner or later, no doubt, all qualified medical practitioners will see the wisdom of these views.

It is a good sign that the lay Press is beginning to take up the question of nursing reform. The medical and pseudo nursing papers have shown themselves systematically silent on the question. We have always felt that the public would do well to take measures to protect itself from bogus nurses, and fraudulent dealing in the untrained; and the following remarks from *Madame* are much to the point:—

"It is to be hoped that the revelations which are beginning to astonish people concerning the question of women masquerading as nurses who have no right to wear the uniform, being untrained and incompetent, will lead to some less haphazard system of engaging hospital nurses. These spurious nurses do an incalculable amount of harm to the profession generally by their incompetence; and even if their patients do not suffer seriously from their inexperience, it is unfair that these free-lances should occupy a position which should be filled, by rights, by women of experience and training. Someone has suggested as the remedy for this unsatisfactory state of things the "State Registration of Nurses," no one being eligible save those who can show a certificate of at least three years' training in a hospital, but in the meantime something ought to be devised in order to cope with this scandal, for scandal it is. It is shameful that any woman who has gone through a thorough course of training and has borne the burden and heat of the day, should be ousted by some so-called nurse, who has no qualification for her calling, and who has not troubled to fit herself for it in any way save by wearing a uniform to which she has no possible right."

From the report of the General Committee of the Canterbury Nurses Institute we cull the following:—

"It was pointed out in our last annual report that the charitable work done by our Institute is greatly in excess of the work paid for by the subscriptions, donations, and offertories, in that one of the two District Nurses is an honorary worker. During part of this year she has been laid up as the result of over-

work, and it has been necessary to employ a paid nurse. The startling disparity between the receipts and expenditure is at once apparent in the account. A separate leaflet on this subject will be issued by the House Committee and circulated among the residents of Canterbury and its neighbourhood in the hope that the public will begin to realize that this charitable side of the work deserves much heartier support than it has ever yet received."

In seconding the adoption of the report, we are pleased to see that Dr. Blore emphasized the fact that during the year the district nurses had not received the support from the outside world which they were entitled to expect. It was perfectly true that that Institution had its origin from the desire for district nursing in Canterbury, and it had been going on for a good many years, but during the year they had to contribute a sum of £60 for charitable work, which came out of the earnings of the Nurses' Institute. The district nursing was a charitable work done amongst the poor of Canterbury, and he thought the citizens should support it and not make any deficiency come out of the Institute funds.

It is strange that the wealthy in this cathedral city—in which the Primate is often resident—should be willing to have the sick poor at its gates nursed and cared for by the charity of the nurses, because this is the plain position of the case. Surely they have listened many times in their fine House of Worship to the King's beautiful words of promise to those on the right hand, and to the message of despair for those on the left. May they take them to heart.

We deeply regret to notice in the report of the Royal United Hospital, Bath, that this system of "appropriation" of private nurses earnings is also in force. To quote:—

"The Nursing Institute, besides supplying all the special nurses required in the Hospital, has contributed £150 to the General Fund."

And yet at this institution we are fully aware that the Chairman is the most kind as he is the most generous of men.

Discussing one aspect of the war in South Africa, the *Lancet* says there is sometimes one slender satisfaction in hearing of wounded men having been left for hours upon the battlefield. It is that in certain cases—those of abdominal wounds, for example—the absence of all movement, and the deprivation of fluid nourishment for the time being, offer the best chances of recovery, because the best obtainable state of physiological rest during the earliest stages of reparative process is thus secured.

This is indeed an instance of making the best of a bad job!

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)