

[We must open our criticism of Mr. Brook's letter by expressing our regret that he has thought fit to take the unethical course of sending his letter, dealing with professional matters in this journal, to a lay publication, that is, to a journal not edited by a member of the nursing profession. We presume that had Mr. Brook thought fit to object to matters in the *British Medical Journal* he would not have hastened to forward his letter to the *Family Doctor*. But, as medical etiquette in relation to nursing has yet to be defined, perhaps Mr. Brook must not be blamed too severely for his lack of professional courtesy.

The fact is that for some time past there has been much undesirable medical meddling with nursing matters at the Swansea General Hospital, and a most able Matron has recently resigned. Upon more than one occasion we have called attention to the private nursing arrangements at this hospital, and to prove our contention that nurse sweating has existed we quote the following report of the private nursing department from the Annual Report:—

RECEIPTS.			EXPENDITURE.		
	£	s. d.		£	s. d.
To balance at bank	8	14 1	By salaries	38	14 11
Received for nurses' services ...	...	112 10 0	Balance ...	82	9 2
	£121	4 1		£121	4 1

We are informed that the late Matron strongly objected to utilising probationers as private nurses, and also to Mr. Brook's mandate on behalf of the Hon. Medical Staff to the House Committee that she should be instructed for the future to engage probationers for a term of four years instead of three, with the object of making private nursing compulsory.

The paragraph referred to by Mr. Brook runs as follows:—

"In nearly every provincial town the hospital authorities have recognised that, in addition to their primary duty, viz., the treatment of the sick poor, it is also their duty to train nurses for the benefit of the community which supports that hospital. So favourably situated is a hospital to make a financial success of such an undertaking that in many cases it is made a substantial source of revenue. We, however, consider that a hospital should be quite content that the private nursing staff should pay its own expenses, and that the nurses should have their own earnings."

We entirely disagree with Mr. Brook that it is the duty of a hospital to carry on a private nursing business, any more than it is their duty to supply medical advice outside their own institution. The duty of the Committee of the Swansea Hospital is to arrange for the efficient care of the patients admitted to its wards, and to enforce an efficient curriculum of training for their nursing staff.

For the rest, Mr. Brook's letter attacks the policy of the *Nursing Record* during a period in which we were not the editor. His statement, however, that the *Nursing Record* was one of the bitterest opponents of co-operation amongst nurses is totally inaccurate. The *Nursing Record*, from start to finish, has been the only paper which has claimed for nurses the right to co-operate professionally, and, had the Nurses' Co-operation taken its excellent advice when it was formed in 1891, the nurses would have realised then, as they realise now, that instead of being in the position of members of the Co-

operation, with corresponding rights and privileges Sir Henry Burdett and his friends formed themselves into "The Nurses' Co-operation," and placed the nurses in the position of employes of that Co-operation, with no legal power over the profits at all. Opposition to this unjustifiable organisation of a Nurses' Co-operation was no doubt expressed by the *Nursing Record*, but it was not opposition to co-operation amongst nurses, but to the nobbling of absolute power over them, and of the surplus funds they earned, after paying the cost of upkeep.

As Mr. Brook's letter gave no information on several salient points on the question under discussion, we wrote to Mr. W. D. Hughes, Secretary to the Hospital, asking for definite information on the following points, and desire to thank him for the promptness and courtesy with which he has replied to our inquiries. We asked:—

1. For the suggestions for the organisation of the Private Nursing Staff submitted by Mr. Brook to the Hospital Board.

2. Whether probationers are sent out private nursing during their term of training, or if all the nurses employed in this way have held a certificate of general training.

3. What are the fees charged to the public for the services of the nurses?

4. What are the salaries paid by the hospital to the private nurses?

This is his reply:—

To the Editor of the "*British Journal of Nursing*."

DEAR MADAM,—Replying to your letter of the 12th, I beg to state—

1. That on July 16th last Mr. Brook proposed that the following recommendations be adopted:—

- That in future nurses should be engaged for three complete years' training at the hospital, and that it be optional whether they remain the fourth year as private nurses.
- That the Private Nursing Department be conducted so as to pay its own expenses only.
- That in future no probationer be employed under Rule 118\* as a private nurse unless she has satisfactorily passed her examinations, and then only under the supervision of a member of the Hon. Medical Staff.
- That subject to paragraph (b), the remuneration of private nurses be during their first year two-thirds of their earnings, and during their second year three-fourths of their earnings—a minimum of £35 being guaranteed.

2. Probationers have been until recently sent out during their term of training. See By-law 118 enclosed.

3. The fees charged to the general public are as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
For one week or part of a week	...	1	6 0
For each week or part of a week for typhoid fever and diphtheria cases...	...	2	2 0
For one day or one night	...	0	5 0
For attendance at an operation	...	0	7 6

\* 118.—The term of a Probationer's engagement is three complete years. After a month's trial, and on being approved, Probationers will be engaged on the distinct understanding that they remain for that period. They will be subject to dismissal, however, at any time, in case of misconduct, or if they should be considered inefficient, or are inattentive to their duties. During the third year she will remain in the service of the Hospital, either as a hospital or private nurse, as the Matron may require.

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