

Appeals are frequently put forward on behalf of the Benefit Nursing Association (Holt-Ockley system), which provides women to live in the cottage homes of the poor, and undertake their nursing care in illness. We do not wish to deny that there is room for the work of carefully-picked women as cottage helps in this direction, although the difficulties connected with a system which combines even elementary nursing and the household work of a cottage, and which requires the employee to sleep in the cottage—which may be safely assumed to have no spare bedroom—are great. Where we do quarrel with the advocates of this system is that they profess to supply “good and skilled nursing,” that the woman employed have a “thorough training, both in general and maternity nursing,” all this for a subscription of 2s. a year and a weekly fee when the “nurse” is in the house of 2s. 6d. a week and upwards. “Two shillings,” says Mrs. Walter, “is not a large sum to ensure the services of a trained nurse.” Perhaps not; but no one with an adequate comprehension of what is involved in the term “trained nurse” will allow that it is applicable to women who receive their training “in a cottage or maternity hospital for periods varying from six to twelve months,” which is the term of training under the Holt-Ockley system. A man trained for a few months in first aid might as well pose as a medical practitioner.

The opinion of Mr. Justice Ridley expressed in connection with a case heard at the Worcester Assizes may be legally sound, but it cannot be said that the verdict of the jury, based on this opinion in connection with the Master of Martley Workhouse, Worcestershire, who sued the Guardians for a pension, is in accordance with the British conception of justice.

The facts of the case are that Mrs. Battersea, a former Matron of the workhouse, sued the Guardians for a life pension on the basis of twenty years' Poor Law service. When grave misconduct was alleged against her, including charges that she was habitually drunk and incapable of performing her duties, and that she sent meat out of the workhouse, she invited a Local Government Board inquiry, but resigned on a certificate of ill-health, so rendering the inquiry *ultra vires*. The jury, after hearing the evidence, found that the Matron's reason for resigning her position was the fear of inquiry, and not illness, and that she had been guilty of intemperance. The verdict was therefore for the Guardians.

But Mr. Battersea, formerly Master of the workhouse, whose office was terminated by Mrs. Battersea's resignation, also sued the Guardians for a life pension. The judge held that grave misconduct by the Matron, under the joint appointment, also disentitled the Master to a pension, and a verdict was given in accordance with this opinion.

Surely public officials should stand or fall on their own merits. Unless the Guardians can bring forward proof of misconduct against Mr. Battersea as well as his wife, it appears to us that it is only just to grant him the pension which he has earned by long years of service.

The Public Health Committee of the Aberdeen Town Council recently paid a visit of inspection to the City Hospital, when Councillor Cooper presented prizes and certificates gained by the nursing staff. The prizes were as follows:—Senior class (prizes and first-class certificates)—1 and 2, Nurse Davidson and Nurse Frater (equal); 3, Nurse Maver. First-class certificates—Nurse Cowie, Nurse Bruce, and Nurse Skene. Second-class certificates—Nurse Wilson and Nurse Walker. Junior class (prizes)—1, Nurse Watt; 2, Nurse Irvine and Nurse McGaw (equal). First-class certificate—Nurse Mary Hay. Second-class certificates—Nurse Addison, Nurse Corbett, and Nurse Annie Hay. Nursing certificates to those who had completed their three years' training were distributed as follows:—Nurses Sherwood, Mackay, Cowie, Frater, Davidson, and Collier.

The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland attended the annual meeting of St. Patrick's Nurses' House, Dublin, last week, and strongly advocated the necessity of supporting it in the good work it was performing among the poor in Dublin and in remote districts in the West of Ireland.

In Ireland, where party religious feeling runs high, the work of Nursing Societies where proselytising is rigidly excluded is an excellent object-lesson. At the recent meeting of the St. Patrick's Nurses' Home it was stated that the rule was enforced that no attempt should be made by the nurses to interfere with the religion of patients. Obviously, the proper course for a nurse to pursue is to find out and further the wishes of the patient with regard to religious ministrations.

Miss Annie Noon, recently nurse in the Lisburn Infirmary, may, as is alleged, have been “pert” in detailing her grievances as to the dietary provided by the Guardians, but her complaint ventilates a very important point—namely, that nurses in infirmaries should not only be provided with a sufficient quantity of uncooked rations, but arrangements should be made for their proper cooking and service. Unless this is done, two things are likely to happen: sooner than cook their own food, nurses will make their principal meals of tea and bread-and-butter, when they speedily become anæmic and run down, and, secondly, the temptation to take stimulants in excess to invigorate the jaded nervous system is great. Should this occur, guardians who neglect to provide proper meals for their nursing staff should certainly shoulder a large share of the responsibility for the disaster.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)