

## MR. BURDETT AGAIN.

SOME thirteen months ago we received a communication from Messrs. Slaughter and May, solicitors to the Pension Fund, demanding the contradiction of a statement which we made in these columns respecting the Fund. That statement was founded on documentary evidence, officially issued by the Fund itself, and then, and now, in our possession. We distinctly declined therefore to withdraw our statement, and referred Messrs. Slaughter and May to our solicitors. Much to our regret nothing further transpired. But too late to insert in last week's number of this Journal, we received the following letter from Messrs. Slaughter and May, who it appears, therefore, are also Mr. Burdett's solicitors. Let us first recall to our readers' minds the charges made by Mr. Burdett's paper, the *Hospital*, in its issue of May 24, and add the following words, that the only persons of the name of Johnstone on the British Nurses' Association roll of members are thus described on page 53 of the First Annual Report: 833, Johnstone, Eleanor L.; 1412, Johnstone, Sara L.; 2169, Johnstone, Gertrude W.

"ONE OF THE ELITE.—At a recent meeting of the British Nurses' Association it was announced that eight hundred Nurses had applied for Registration, and that these\* were mostly Hospital Matrons, Sisters and Nurses, in fact, as one of the honorary secretaries of the Association put it, 'the *élite* of the Nursing profession.' We have often given our opinion as to the quality of Nurses likely to go on this Register, and an important incident with regard to the above phrase has come to our knowledge. We keep at our office, for our private information, a 'black list'

of those Nurses to whose discredit we have knowledge of certain facts. In January last a Hospital Matron wrote to us giving certain particulars with regard to a Miss Gertrude Johnstone, who had decamped from Teignmouth Infirmary, leaving the committee considerably in debt. In our issue for February 8th, we warned all Hospital authorities against this Miss Johnstone, and at the same time we looked her up in the British Nurses' Association list, and there the name appeared. A fortnight ago further information with regard to Miss Johnstone reached us, and we went to Guy's Hospital, with which she said she was connected, but where we found she was utterly unknown. Then curiosity and that happy phrase about the *élite* tempted us to call at the British Nurses' Association office, and try and find out whether they had any idea where Miss Johnstone was trained (if ever!), or whether they simply never inquired into the references given by would-be members. Ignorance reigned supreme at the British Nurses' Association office; the clerk, who was the only person forthcoming, knew nothing. Then a letter to the Secretary elicited the fact that Miss Gertrude Johnstone was among the eight hundred *élite* who had applied for Registration, and the Secretary requested further information about her. But we do not consider it our duty to make inquiries for the British Nurses' Association. If they cannot even discover such a noted case as this Miss Johnstone's, which appeared both in the local and London Press, we really cannot undertake their work for them; we do not grudge them their *élite*, nor do we wish a single name struck off their Register."

Mr. Burdett's defence, then, is as follows, and for our comments upon each paragraph we refer our readers to the Editorial column.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

18, Austin Friars, London, E.C.

17 June, 1890.

Sir,—Our attention has been called by our client, Mr. Henry C. Burdett, to two articles appearing on pages 277, 278 and 285 of your issue of the 12th instant.

The statements in the articles concerning our client are inaccurate, misleading and untrue. You state in the course of that article "the Press of this country is with the rarest exceptions essentially fair," and in common fairness we must ask you to publish in correction of the errors you have published, and in your next issue, the following statement of facts. The statement is founded upon documentary evidence in our possession, which is open to your inspection.

## THE "NURSING RECORDS" STATEMENTS.

I.—That Mr. Henry C. Burdett, less than three years ago, was himself endeavouring to open a Register of Nurses.

## THE FACTS.

I.—In 1887 a Sectional Committee of the Hospitals' Association, of which Mrs. Bedford Fenwick (*née* Manson) and Miss C. J. Wood were respectively the Chairman and Honorary Secretary, submitted a report to the Council of the Hospitals' Association, embodying proposals, with rules, for a Register of Nurses, which were adopted at a

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)