

who had had a few months Holt-Ockley training, and wrote that she was "better trained than the Queen's, because they are not allowed to work without a doctor and I am." Another said she could show no certificates, but had had a good training under certificated nurses, and had been Estate Nurse over a large district for twelve years. Inquiry proved that this applicant had "never had a day's training," was quite unsuitable, and moreover lived an immoral life. The confidence placed by those who benefit by these schemes is increased by the fact that the nurses are selected and provided by committees of educated and well-known people. Another result of this "easy portal of entrance into the nursing profession" was, Lady Helen pointed out, that "the great majority of these County Nurses, once they have fulfilled their engagement, go off to nurse on their own account. I know," she said, "of many cases where Village Nurses have joined Nursing Associations which advertise that their nurses are all 'fully trained.'"

The speaker proceeded to say that she was not arguing against the employment of partially trained nurses; that was a totally different question. What she wished to urge was the advisability of having a recognised standard for a fully trained nurse, laid down by a Nursing Council, leaving employers free as now to employ whichever type of nurse they prefer.

As regards the best kind of nurse to employ for District Work, Lady Helen said there was considerable divergence of opinion. Most people would agree that in so vital a matter it is advisable to employ the most competent persons available, and few would go the length of the noble Lord, who assured the members of the House when the Registration Bill was under discussion, that "there were two kinds of nurses required—one to nurse the people who had important operations by eminent surgeons, and another to nurse the ordinary ailments of the poor." "We all know," said the speaker, "that there are no 'ordinary ailments' reserved for any one class, and that in so far as skilled nursing contributes to quick and complete recovery it is even more necessary to the wage-earning than to the leisured class." She proceeded to show that this is fully recognised in towns and populous places, but in the rural districts of England—not in Scotland and Ireland—the Cottage, Village, and Holt-Ockley Nurses predominate. The speaker questioned whether it was altogether satisfactory to try to combine in one and the same person the highest skilled work and the roughest manual toil, and said it is obvious that if you pay an individual who discharges these dual offices on the basis of her skilled work you greatly overpay her for her manual work, and *vice versa*; and, further, said that the advantage of the Resident Nurse seems doubtful. In most cottages there is only room for the family, and even then they are rather crowded; "how an extra person, and that often a young woman, is to be suitably accommodated from the point of view of decency and hygiene is not evident. In fact, I have it from Superintendents of Counties that this system is attended with great difficulty and with grave moral risks."

Lady Helen concluded by claiming that, while among the Village Nurses there are superior women doing excellent work, to obtain the best and most enduring results of this great work it is necessary to employ fully trained nurses, and that "it is only possible for those with a high ideal of their work and a real appreciation of its immense possibilities, adequately to take part in what has become one of the most important branches of social service."

We have quoted at length from this paper, partly because it was *the* paper of the Conference, in its logical, irrefutable claim for the authoritative definition of what constitutes a trained nurse, and partly because, although it was entirely impersonal, and referred throughout to systems and not to individuals, it was regarded by Miss Broadwood, Founder of the Holt-Ockley system of Cottage Nursing, as a personal affront, and occasioned on her part a most undignified and unjustifiable attack, in which personal resentment was the most prominent factor.

The glove, indeed, was down between those who claim that the term trained nurse should have a definite meaning, and that the standard for rich and poor should be the same; and those who oppose any such definition, and who are content to provide as nurses for the poor women whose training they would regard as insufficient if they themselves were in need of skilled nursing.

That, however, was ground for discussion, not for a personal attack upon the reader of the paper; but just because the advocates of low standards have so bad a case they seek apparently to justify it, not by arguments, but by personal animosity.

MISS BROADWOOD'S first words: "I speak after having had a very severe slap in the face from a young lady who perhaps has not had twenty-seven years' experience in meeting the wants of her country neighbours and friends," at once introduced the personal note, and she continued to speak, not from the general standpoint, but from that of one concerned in defending a particular system. She described how, 20 years ago, she went to Miss Isla Stewart, Matron of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London; on the advice of the Chairman, and Miss Stewart advised her that the Matrons of Workhouse Infirmaries would probably be most useful to her. What did these Matrons say? One and all told her that no one should call herself a trained nurse who had not had three years' hospital training—an opinion applauded by the audience. If Miss Broadwood had not, as she told the Conference the day before, been "born stubborn," she surely would have listened to this unanimous expert advice. As it was, she induced Miss Katherine Twining to attempt the experiment of training women for a short period in the homes of the poor at Plaistow. With the help of doctors, a curriculum was drawn up, including elementary instruction in general nursing and hygiene, such as that given at ambulance classes, instruction which did not extend to the care of serious operations, but the pupils were trained in maternity nursing or midwifery. "The curriculum has never been altered for twenty years," Miss Broad-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)