

was inaugurated three years ago, has done splendid work this year, 1,184 articles having been sent in. These include 25 pairs of blankets and a large number of quilts. The sum of £75 was collected in subscriptions. The work of such Leagues is a substantial help to matrons and committees of hospitals.

An advertisement appears in our Supplement this week offering a large room in the house of a nurse in Rita Road, South Lambeth. We know the lady well who makes the offer, and feel sure anyone desiring residence in that neighbourhood would find thoroughly pleasant surroundings.

The lay nursing journal which is urging trained nurses to exhibit their inventions at the forthcoming Exhibition at the Horticultural Hall, appears to resent our little paragraph headed "Be Careful," which appeared on March 23rd, advising nurses that if they showed their inventions without first taking out a provisional patent such inventions could not be afterwards protected, and might be stolen from them; and it makes an attack on methods (of which it knows nothing) of the previous organization of nursing exhibitions in connection with inventions. Anyway, we again warn the nursing profession to be careful, not only in protecting their inventions before exhibition, but in all their business dealings with pseudo-nursing journals exploiting their professional work for profit.

The amount of criticism and superfluous advice levelled at women prominent in the nursing world at home and abroad by the lay editors of the pseudo-nursing press has ceased to amuse the class exploited, and is usually ignored. Last week Sir Henry Burdett clumsily attacked our dear Miss Dock, who is not here to protect herself. Miss Dock, a most astute little lady, never speaks or writes without reliable information, and her advice to nurses in England to "dare to revolt" when intimidated by matrons or committees concerning their professional registration, is thoroughly justified. She writes in the *American Journal of Nursing* "that petty despots are always cowards, . . . and that a nurse will find that submitting to tyranny will only make her lot worse." Sir Henry Burdett's organ demands "that if Miss Dock has personal knowledge of a single case of intimidation on the part of a matron or a committee in an English hospital she ought to have the courage to furnish full particulars." We could do it for

her from a pile of written communications, to say nothing of the record inciting to tyranny in the nursing world, to be found in the journal he controls, throughout its whole contemptible career.

Lord and Lady Leonfield entertained the West Sussex Benefit Nursing Association at Petworth House for the Annual Meeting, and presented the nurses with certificates. Miss Bennett, Matron of the Metropolitan Hospital, spoke on the cottage nurse. Conditions in the country, she said, differed from those in the towns. Here a want was met by the cottage nurse which was not met by the district nurse or by a nurse highly trained in a hospital. "You want a woman in absolutely strong health, able to rough it; who does not mind eating the food of the cottagers; who knows a little bit about domestic work and what cottage life is. I happen to know a lady who trains some of these nurses. We tell them how wrong it is to criticise what the doctor does; that they must not prescribe—the great fault of Mrs. Gamp. They are trained to know that they do not know much. When a nurse has once learned that, she has learned what many years of nursing teach her." Miss Bennett went on to speak of the cottage nurse as nurse, as helper, and as teacher. She spoke highly of the nurse as helper, making it possible for the overworked mother to rest without fretting, knowing that the household was in capable care; and of the sensitiveness of the poor, which made it possible for the nurse to assist in cases where the help of neighbours, however well-intentioned, was unwelcome. And of the nurse as teacher—"The ignorance of our people about the simple laws of health is far worse in the country than in the town. Women know very little about their children." The nurse taught the value of cleanliness, fresh air, and hygiene. "When a cottage nurse has been resident in a house, that house is never so dirty as it has been before."

No doubt cottage nurses may have their uses in a domestic sense, but surely it is not just that the poor should be supplied with women as "nurses" who are "trained to know they do not know much." In our opinion, if the people in rural districts are even more ignorant than those in towns, the cottage nurse with little knowledge has no right to attempt to teach. May the day soon come when the rural poor will be considered worthy of trained and skilled nursing in sickness—the present system is wrong in principle, and dangerous in application.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)