

last year, have decided that the Insurance Act shall make no change as regards the treatment of patients. The workers contribute £8,000 annually to the institution in weekly penny levies.

LEGAL MATTERS.

COUPER v. LORD BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH.

The result of Lord Balfour of Burleigh's appeal in the action for slander brought against him by Miss Elizabeth Birnie Couper, Matron of the Clackmannan Infectious Diseases Hospital, Alloa, in the Court of Session, Edinburgh, last week, resulted in the dismissal of the action.

The facts of the case have already been reported in this Journal.

Lord Dundas, who gave the leading opinion, said it was admitted on the one hand that the statements were *prima facie* libellous, and on the other that the occasions were privileged. The sole question was whether or not the pursuer had relevantly averred malice. His lordship did not think that legitimate inference of malice could be drawn.

Lord Balfour, writing to the County Clerk, asked for a strict enquiry, and said: "I am told, but this is hearsay, that the matron was responsible for putting the Sauchie woman into close proximity to the two Forbes children, and that she did it in spite of remonstrances from at least one other member of the staff. If this is the case it points in my opinion to criminal conduct." That was the paragraph chiefly complained of.

Lord Dundas did not think that a member of the public, who had, in the bona fide discharge of a duty, submitted matters to a public authority for their investigation, was legally bound—if the result of such investigation was to absolve some person from injurious implication in the subject matter inquired into—to apologise to that person.

NOBLESSE OBLIGE.

It might be that the defender could, in the circumstances, without any sacrifice of principle or of dignity, have expressed some measure of regret that statements made by him in the bona fide discharge of a duty, upon information which turned out to be in part, at least, erroneous, should have cast an unmerited reflection upon the pursuer's character and caused her pain and inconvenience. It might be that such an expression would have been a kind and handsome act on his part. But these considerations were matters outside the province and contemplation of a Court of Law. He knew of no authority for holding that the mere obstinate retention of a personal belief or view was by itself a ground upon which malice might be inferred, and that was what the pursuer's argument must amount to.

Miss Couper has our entire sympathy, as a suggestion of "criminal conduct," necessitating a public enquiry before exoneration, should only be made on definite proof, and not as the defender admitted on "hearsay evidence."

SOCIAL SERVICE.

A POSTER PARADE.

"It is nothing to you, all you who pass by."

Given suitable circumstances, the open street of a big city is probably the best gallery of living pictures in which to pursue "the proper study of mankind." Opposition and grievous disappointment wait on those who are labouring for reforms of any sort. Such a state of things only serves to emphasise the *need* for reforms, and that reflection is in itself a compensation to those of a hopeful disposition. If we understood human nature a little better, we should not be surprised to find so many people who are still so prejudiced and so ignorant concerning the Woman Suffrage Movement. Why do women want the vote? At least one hundred good reasons might be given, but the one supreme all-embracing reason is this: *We must and will have power in order to uplift humanity, and make it purer, healthier, and happier.* The strength and purity of our desire has become an immanent power, and we know that we shall win, but—the strife is not o'er, nor "the battle won." For those who identify themselves with this great cause there is work of all and every kind. "Will you join the Poster Parade?" "Will you sell *The Vote* at such and such a pitch?" These and other appeals to my pen and pocket reach me from time to time from the Suffrage societies to which I am proud to belong.

Selling the paper is most interesting, even if one does not sell many copies, as Miss Dock found it, whose amusing sketch I have thoroughly enjoyed. This is the physiognomist's opportunity. The mere sight of one holding up a paper with the pregnant word *Vote* inscribed upon it seems to cause unpleasant expressions to appear on the faces of the passers-by. Hard, unsympathetic, disdainful, angry expressions. One elderly lady, looking fiercely at me says: "You should not break windows!"

A broken window can be mended in half-an-hour. There is no mending the broken hearts of poor mothers, and minds deranged with grief, when human devils steal their young daughters and sell them to infamy. The two breaks cannot be mentioned in the same breath. When will men and women learn to acquire a sense of proportion, and look at *motives* rather than *methods*? Windows have been broken because of the hideous wickedness of the White Slave Traffic, and women—whose hearts are bleeding for the poor young victims—are powerless to prevent it.

Trafalgar Square presents a busy scene when well-known women are speaking eloquently from the plinth. I walk among the crowd with a flat case containing literature suspended from my neck. The smiling face of a woman attracts me, and I offer my wares. She discourses at some length, but buys nothing. A complaisant gentleman tells me he is in sympathy with the move-

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