

violent, were handed in by my sister. I have had them printed, and shall be happy to supply any subscriber to the London Hospital with a copy. Couched in carefully chosen language, they contain grave charges against the administration, charges now fully admitted—subject to the hackneyed deprecation that they are “ancient history.”

My sister's only offence was that she had moral courage to insist on going to her dying father, and to resist the extortion of a fine of thirteen guineas for permission.

In the Lords' Committee-room, with both ladies present, Miss Lückes describing my sister as “essentially common and lacking in refinement” only occasioned good-natured amusement; but a different sentiment was evoked when the busy-body of the Hospital world retailed the description in his paper with this *manly* comment:—“When the Matron read from her private register the view of the characters of these old Probationers some of them must have had a foretaste of the judgment day.”

So far from this register being “private,” it is the official record kept in compliance with the Standing Orders. (8,154.)

The minutes not only *suppress* the material fact that our father was dying (he died within three days), but imply the Matron had no reason to believe he was seriously ill. That we declined to “give any evidence” as to our father's health I have denied on oath. Nevertheless, the House Committee refuse to expunge these objectionable—I think I may fairly say scurrilous—minutes, and have not considered the matter of sufficient importance to give my sister or myself a personal interview.

I have accordingly informed the House Committee that I must try to bring about the deletion of these entries by less private means, and I shall esteem it a favour if by publication of this communication you will be so good as to aid me in my endeavour.—I am, Sir, sincerely yours,

W. C. HOMERSHAM.

24, South Villas, Camden Square, N.W.

To the Editor of “The Nursing Record.”

Sir,—I do hope that your readers will not think that because one woman who is a Matron of a Hospital, and is all-powerful, that therefore all the abuses which exist in the management of these institutions are the fault of the Matron, and that she naturally approves of them. I can only say such views are wrong. Many women working as Matrons of Hospitals are quite or nearly powerless—what with secretaries, resident medical officers, and unprofessional committees—and would gladly improve the conditions under which the Nurses have to work. I think your present exposure of the autocratic system at the London may tend to make the work of some Matrons more difficult than ever.—Yours faithfully,
AN IRISH MATRON.
[“Let justice be done though the heavens fall.”—ED.]

MIDWIVES' REGISTRATION BILL.

To the Editor of “The Nursing Record.”

Dear Sir,—As Clause 6 of the Midwives' Registration Bill—now before Parliament—states that a Midwife shall recover fees in Court for attendance on “natural” cases of labour only (although it does not state that she shall not attend abnormal or unnatural labours), will you please give me your definition of the following term:—What is a “natural labour”?—Yours faithfully,

ROBERT REID RENTOUL, M.D.

78, Hartington Road, Liverpool.

[We have referred this enigma to a distinguished Obstetric Physician, who kindly writes as follows:—“A ‘natural labour’ may be defined as a labour which nature requires no assistance to complete. During the process of parturition only a highly experienced person can prognosticate its course and result. After the process no human being who has not wit-

ness it can possibly know, except by hearsay, what its course has been.” The Midwives' Bill clearly expects the County Councils to be composed, therefore, of supernatural beings, because they are expected to know in any given case whether the labour was natural or not.—ED.]

REPLIES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Lady Superintendent.—It is very few “queen bees” who can heartily sympathise with the drones. We venture to think had you been trained as a regular Probationer, and not a lady pupil, and yourself performed the arduous duties relegated to the first-mentioned class of Nurses, you would be more lenient in your views concerning your subordinates.

Home Sister.—It is impossible in these days to prevent opinions being expressed in the press, and we consider a little wholesome criticism an excellent incentive to progress and reform. We have read the diet sheet, and condemn cold suppers after twelve hours' hard work. Substitute for cold water hot cocoa made with milk for four nights in the week, and various hot soups for the remaining three.

Miss Ella S.—There can be no doubt what is your duty, and no feeling of self-interest should prevent you performing it. Your patients suffer under existing regulations; protest against those regulations to your superior officer. We have in our possession a small black book of notes taken during her probation three years ago, in one of the large London Hospitals, by a lady who felt quite powerless, as you do, knowing well that any expression of disapproval on her part would be the signal for her dismissal. We believe that the wide publication of these simple notes will do more to reform the abuses of which you write than an Act of Parliament.

Miss Julia Grant.—Apply to the Secretary, B.N.A. office, 8, Oxford Circus Avenue.

Puzzled.—We own we cannot understand a woman who professes to be a Nurse systematically attacking the professional union of her fellow-Nurses in an unprofessional journal. Doubtless, however, it is merely a matter of business—in other words, of bread and butter.

COMPETITIVE PRIZE ESSAY. TWENTY-SECOND COMPETITION.

A Book or Books of the value of One Guinea will be awarded for an Essay upon the following subject:—

“Give your idea of what obedience should consist of in the offices of a Probationer, a fully Trained Nurse, a Sister, and a Matron respectively.”

RULES.

1.—Contributions must reach the Editor, at the office of THE NURSING RECORD, not later than Saturday, January 31st, 1891, addressed as follows:—“Prize Essay Competition, THE NURSING RECORD, St. Dunstan's House, Fetter Lane, London, E.C.”

2.—Manuscript must be written distinctly in ink and on one side of the paper only, upon not less than 24 nor more than 48 pages of ordinary-sized ruled sermon paper. The pages must be numbered and fastened together.

3.—The real and full name and address (stating whether Miss or Mrs., of the Competitor must be inscribed on the back of each contribution, and notification of which Hospital or Institution the Competitor has been or is attached to.

4.—Trained Nurses or those personally associated with Nursing work only allowed to compete.

Winners in previous Competitions are permitted to compete, but in case of a “tie” the prize would be awarded to the Competitor who has not secured a prize before.

The decision of the Prize Essay Editor to be final, and any infringement of the above Rules will be considered a disqualification.

NOTICE.—The Prize Essay Editor will not undertake to return MSS. unless accompanied with a sufficiently stamped addressed envelope; and in no case will he be responsible for any loss of same during transmission, &c. In no case must manuscripts be rolled up when sent by post; they must be folded.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)