

editor is not in favour of the Charter being granted to the Nurses' Association, but for what reason is by no means clear. It may be that he has an idea that, if the Charter is granted, it will throw difficulties in the way of the Midwives' Registration Bill, which he has strongly supported in the past, and will, doubtless, support again when a favourable opportunity of bringing it before the House presents itself. The Parliamentary Bills' Committee of the British Medical Association meets next week, and I shall not be surprised if an attempt is made to get the Committee to pass a resolution antagonistic to the Charter; but if such a resolution be passed, it will not represent the views of the members of the Association, who, by the way, are never invited in public meeting to express their views on any of the medico-political questions of the day. And here is the value of the General Practitioners' Alliance. When any question affecting the interests of the profession—such as the Midwives' Bill, Hospital management, &c.—comes before Parliament or the public, the Council of the Alliance can convene a meeting of the profession at a few days' notice, and thus bring pressure to bear in official quarters in the direction required by professional interests. No other medical organisation can do this. Medical politics are outside the scope of the Medical Defence Union; and the British Medical Association is so constituted and governed that it is practically impossible for the members to publicly express their opinions until long after such action would be of the least service."

On the day of the meeting of the General Practitioners' Alliance, the following paragraph appeared in *The St. James's Gazette*, and I cannot compliment our contemporary upon the accuracy of its information. In fact, it is quite plain that our guileless contemporary has been utterly gulled, because, as all my readers know, the statements are neither novel nor true.

"A meeting of the members of the General Practitioners' Alliance is to be held this afternoon at Exeter Hall to discuss the proposed Charter to the Royal British Nurses' Association. The object of the promoters of this Association is to provide Nurses with a scheme of voluntary Registration, and with a central society which shall be able to give Certificates of fitness apart from the various Hospitals and Private Nursing agencies which are at present responsible for their own staff and members. At first sight, this proposal of a central Register may seem attractive; but the largest Nursing interests in the Metropolis and throughout the country are opposed to it, and the meeting this afternoon represents an important and organised opposition. It is pointed out that the proposed scheme will lower the position of Nurses, be detrimental to the advancement of teaching, disadvantageous to the public, and injurious to the Doctors. It would tend to injure the present independent agencies by doing away with the *esprit de corps* which Nurses have—and profit by having—in connection with each special Institution. But the soundest objection, it seems to us, in the public interest, is that the keeper of this Register could only, in return for a fee, certify that a Nurse was fit for her work, and, while in possession of such a Certificate, she might be for years without employment till she lost her fitness. But, as she would still have the Certificate, the public would be in some considerable danger of being imposed upon.

Many of my readers will exclaim with me, "I know that 'Par.'—it comes from Sheffield."

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I AM told that several members of the Alliance have written to the Editor concerning his misstatement that "their meeting represented an important and organised opposition" to the Royal British Nurses' Association. Perhaps by next week I may be able to reprint their letters from the columns of *The St. James's Gazette*. I hope so, for the sake of the honesty and fairness for which our British Press is renowned.

* * *

A CORRESPONDENT writes:—

"I was much interested and pleased, as an old King's Nurse, to read your words of commendation in last week's 'Echoes' concerning all that has lately been done for the benefit of the Probationers at King's College Hospital. It is quite true that at no London Hospital have the Nurses such short hours of work, or a more comfortable 'Home.' But in one thing you do not seem quite fair, or perhaps you are not aware, that a very large income is made for the Hospital out of the earnings of those Nurses on the Private Staff. The Hospital is very poor, and for my part I should have no objection in working for it, and handing over say £50 per annum to the Committee for the good of the Institution. It would be money well spent; but what I do object to on principle is that a Private Nurse should be paid £30 per annum as the value of her skilled labour, when her marketable value is in reality £100 per annum, and then that the Nurse and the public should have no audited account of the business published. If the Nurses working on the Private Staff of our Charitable Institutions are the largest subscribers to the Charity, why do not their donations appear in the balance-sheet, and their names amongst the Life Governors?"

* * *

"Many of our poor tired little Nurses would open their eyes very wide indeed if it was proved to them, as it easily might be, were the audited receipts and expenditure of their department printed, that they were practically larger subscribers to the Hospital than the majority of the Committee. Take the London Hospital, for instance. I find from the Report for 1892 that there are twenty-one Nurses on the Private Staff, and that the net profits on this department in 1891 were £1,392 18s. 3d. In other words, each Nurse presented to the Hospital last year no less than £66, a sum which entitles her to become a Life Governor twice over, while I notice that Mr. E. MURRAY-IND, the Chairman of the Hospital, subscribes five guineas per annum, and thirteen of the Committee give no annual subscription at all."

* * *

I QUITE agree with our correspondent that some acknowledgment is due to the Nurses from the Committees of those Hospitals which benefit so largely from their work. But how about the old age of these estimable women? Would they not be acting with greater judgment and with more self-respect if they refused to be fleeced so outrageously, and saved whilst they are able, part of their earnings for the time when they can no longer work? They should be just to themselves before being anonymously generous.

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