

that he secures this interest by giving the secretary a commission out of the charge made to the friends for the funeral. The statements relating to this will be found in the evidence of Henry Scrimshaw, who says that when he was contractor he frequently paid the secretary a commission varying from £1 10s. to £2 10s., naming on these occasions to the secretary the price at which he was willing to complete the funeral, and leaving the secretary to fill in the account to the friends with a larger sum, he (the secretary) retaining the difference. This is a charge to which most persons would be inclined to lend a ready ear, when informed that the "pauper funerals" were done by this particular contractor at 7s. 6d. a head, and that they are now actually reduced to 2s. for adults and 1s. 9d. for infants. But the truth of a statement is not to be accepted because it is plausible, and in the present instance we have simply the sworn assertion of one man against the sworn denial of another. The charge is that the secretary has accepted bribes to put business in the way of his accuser, and the latter is the man who, according to his own account, gave the bribes. His assertion is unsupported by other evidence. To support his statement he endeavoured to identify particular cases by latter additions to the entries in his books, and in cross-examination he was shown to have made specific statements which, as regards the cases to which they referred, were absolutely untrue. I must therefore conclude that this man's evidence is unworthy of credence, and that the allegation made is without proof. But I think it right to call attention to this extraordinary system of contracts for the funerals of the poor. It seems to me an unsatisfactory answer to say that in fact these funerals are decently conducted. I submit that the practice of giving contracts for work at a merely nominal price is a vicious system, and only too likely to lead to abuse of some kind. It is clear that if the "pauper funerals" were let at a price that would yield the contractor some profit, however moderate, the friends of deceased persons who are not paupers might have a chance of getting the funerals for which they pay at a more moderate price than at present—a consideration of much importance to many of them.

13. "Several old nurses who had been in the institution for many years, and had proved themselves good and faithful servants, were a short time ago dismissed without cause, and were only taken on again after public indignation had been expressed on the subject."

14. "Nurse Cameron, who had been a night-nurse in the accident ward for six years, was dismissed on charges of immorality and cruelty without giving her an opportunity of hearing the evidence against her or of defending herself, although she went to the meeting of the Board with twenty witnesses in her behalf." This stands as No. 20 in the other paper, thus: "That the authorities in charge have retained persons on the staff unfit for their duties, while seeking to dismiss highly-qualified and experienced nurses."

It will be convenient first to deal with the statements about Nurse Cameron. This nurse does not appear to have been charged with immorality, as alleged, but with undue familiarity with a patient named Stewart, and in that connection with breaches of some of the by-laws. Of this Mrs. Neill, after her inquiry, considered that there was sufficient evidence, and she also came to the conclusion that, although there was no intentional cruelty, yet that the nurse's manner to patients had been so rough and ungente as to merit the name of cruelty to sick and helpless persons. But it is not true that Nurse Cameron was condemned or dismissed without a hearing, or an opportunity of defending herself. In the first place she was suspended, as a result of inquiries made by the House Surgeon into certain charges made against her. When her suspension was notified to her she was furnished with a list of the charges made against her, and the 30th January was appointed for an inquiry into these charges by the house committee. This inquiry was, however, deferred in consequence of a proposal that a general inquiry into the matters alleged in the "Tongariro" letter should be made by Dr. MacGregor, in which inquiry it was thought that Nurse Cameron's affair might also be included. The general and particular inquiries were subsequently made by Mrs. Neill. Mrs. Neill had an interview with Nurse Cameron, in which she obtained from her a general reply to the charges, and a further interview was appointed for the 16th February, which, however, Nurse Cameron failed to keep. The impression that Nurse Cameron was not granted a hearing may have been partly caused by the circumstance that when Mr. Knight Hunt, her solicitor, on the 13th February, applied to Mrs. Neill for a copy of the evidence against her, he received in reply a letter, the purport of which seems to be that Mrs. Neill declined to recognise any solicitor in the matter. That in so declining she acted with perfect propriety I do not see how there can be the least doubt. A lady, contemplating the dismissal of a housemaid, would hardly feel called upon to furnish the latter's solicitor with a written copy of the evidence against her; and I entirely fail to see why any different procedure is to be adopted in the case of a hospital nurse, notwithstanding the greater dignity and importance of her office, which I would certainly be the last to underrate. Any servant whatever, if wrongly dismissed, has a remedy at law, but in the meantime the matter lies solely between himself and his employer. Perhaps it would have been better if Mrs. Neill had explicitly stated in her letter to Mr. Knight Hunt that she would still expect to see Nurse Cameron at the appointed time and place; but it was in no way necessary for her to do this, and, if it was by her solicitor's advice that the nurse absented herself, I can only say that such advice, however suitable for the purpose of fomenting an outside agitation, was little calculated to clear her in the estimation of her employers. But this is not the only occasion on which Nurse Cameron has failed to avail herself of the opportunities offered her. Throughout the whole of my inquiry she has never come forward either to refute any of the charges made against her, or to establish any complaint of unjust treatment of herself by the Hospital authorities. She has, however, married the very man with whom she was accused of too much intimacy. The whole of the allegations about Nurse Cameron may be considered to have fallen entirely to the ground.

But the fact that this supposed grievance in the case of Nurse Cameron has so completely failed to be substantiated surely affords some general presumption that, with regard to other nurses also, the Hospital authorities would be likely to judge more accurately of their conduct, their capacity, and their fitness for different kinds of duties than irresponsible persons outside. This is