

The Nursing Record

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Contents.

EDITORIAL	241
A GUIDE TO MEDICAL AND SURGICAL NURSING—	
CHAPTER XII.	243
WHITE SLAVERY IN HOSPITALS	244
SOME ASPECTS OF COTTAGE HOSPITAL LIFE. BY	
ELINOR PELL SMITH	246
NURSING ECHOES	248
THIS WEEK'S VACANCIES	250
HOSPITAL INTELLIGENCE	251
NOTES ON USEFUL PREPARATIONS, INVENTIONS,	
NOVELTIES, &c.	251
EXTERIORS AND INTERIORS.—MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL	252
"NURSING RECORD" BENEVOLENT FUND	253
WOMEN AND THEIR WORK	253
CORRESPONDENCE	254
REPLIES TO CORRESPONDENTS	256
VACANT APPOINTMENTS, WANTED, &c.	256
COMPETITIVE PRIZE ESSAY	256

EDITORIAL.

WE desire to call the attention of our readers to an Article which we reprint in another column, and which appeared recently in a contemporary. We much regret both its tone and its substance for many reasons, but chiefly because such statements as it contains must bring unmerited disgrace on Institutions, which, all things considered, do an immensity of good, and, in addition, may persuade some people that Hospital Nurses, as a body, are treated harshly and unfairly. We are not surprised to see that this latter assumption has been flatly contradicted by several of our contemporary's subsequent correspondents. That there are many things which need reform in Hospital management we have never denied; but we believe that, even as the improvements within the last few years have been great, so it is most probable that they will continue and extend in every direction. And we fear that exaggerated assertions, of the kind we are considering, will retard rather than advance their consummation.

To begin with, then, we contend that the statements of this article are so highly coloured, as to be quite undistinguishable from pure fiction. In the first place we are told, that "in a Hospital everyone is cared for except a Nurse, who is considered simply as a machine, wound up by an imaginative enthusiasm, set going by the opposition of friends, and expected to work night and day, until the spring breaks and life is useless." This is the key-note of the whole communication. Now, while admitting—for the sake of argument—that there may be one or two small Hospitals, in the length and breadth of the land, where such a state of affairs might be possible, we entirely deny that it is, in any manner or degree, true of Hospitals generally; and, therefore, we complain most strongly of the universal application made by our contemporary.

The most superficial consideration of the subject would convince any unprejudiced mind that, were Nurses as a class—or even any appreciable number of them—treated as our contemporary describes, they would long ago have made the country ring with their grievances, through the columns of our contemporary itself; and Hospitals, of all Institutions, would be the least able to act in this manner, because they are entirely dependent on public approval and support for their very existence. On the other hand, we—as the representative organ of the profession—have no hesitation in saying that Nurses are as well cared for as anyone else in Hospitals; and we feel confident that they would themselves, individually and collectively, completely substantiate our declaration. That their hours of daily work are long we do not for a moment deny; but although they may excite the wrath of Socialistic reformers, we fail to see how, under the circumstances, this can be avoided.

A writer in the *Queen* suggests having three shifts of workers each day, so that every Nurse would work eight hours. When this is brought down to its practical results, the mind quails

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)