

At a time when the brawny-handed sons of toil are debating whether they will be content with any longer working day than eight hours, these Hospital Sisters have to be on duty, it seems, for twelve hours out of twenty-four, and for seven days a week, with a fortnight's holiday in the year. However Miss Lückes, the Matron of the London Hospital, may minimise the hardships of the Nurse's lot, as she tries to do in her article in *The New Review*, the admitted facts speak for themselves. Miss Lückes, it is true, attributes much of the recent agitation to 'the tendency on the part of unsuitable persons to rush into Hospital work far too lightly.' When they find the life means real hard work, instead of sentiment and excitement, they feel, she says, 'unreasonably injured and disappointed.' This may account for some of the agitation, but not surely for all. No one expects a Nurse's life to be a bed of roses, but because some Sisters with constitutions of iron have survived the terrible strain of leisureless toil, it does not make the system defensible.

"SOME, however, of the witnesses, whose evidence is recorded in the Blue Book just published, fill in the details in the daily life at the London Hospital in a way that makes it appear a very different affair from what the casual reader of the Matron's article might suppose it. We read, among many other things that ought not to be, that twenty or thirty patients have been allotted to the responsible charge for the night of a young Nurse of a few months' experience, and that an 'untrained Probationer' has been left all day in charge of a Ward. Consider what this must mean both for the Nurse and for the patients. There is, further, the grievous charge against this Hospital of sweating its Nurses, coupled with that of defrauding the public, under the system by which partially-trained Probationers have been sent out as 'thoroughly trained' Nurses to earn large fees from the public, which go to swell the revenues of the Hospital, while the Nurse, who has to devote herself unremittingly to the sick person, gets a small pittance of about £16 a year.

"As one who signs himself 'M.D.' puts it, 'the public subscribes to keep Nurses in the Hospital to tend the sick poor, but the Hospital sends some out to make a net profit of £1,200 a year, and leaves the remainder to be necessarily overworked, and the patients in its Wards necessarily neglected.' It is clear that reform is imperative, and equally clear that it must be paid for by the public, whose servants these Hospital Nurses are. Perhaps it may be necessary to remodel our Hos-

pital system altogether, and adopt some such plan as Sir Morell Mackenzie sketches in the *Contemporary Review*. A large proportion of applicants for outdoor relief, and many even of the indoor patients, could pay for the advice and treatment they receive. He proposes that there should be a Medical Relief Office in every London parish, where patients could be sorted by experienced officials into their proper classes, and be at once provided with a ticket of admission to the nearest Poor Law Infirmary, Hospital, or Dispensary, according to circumstances. The Poor Law Infirmary would, of course, be absolutely free; for the Hospital a trifling fee—say, from one shilling to three shillings a week during attendance—should be payable; for the Dispensary the payment would be on a definite actuarial scale. But the crying evil in the present Hospital system is the sweating and overworking of Nurses, which, now that its attention has been called to it, public opinion will endure no longer."

I HAVE much pleasure in stating that Miss H. N. Anderson has chosen as her prize in connection with the last Post Card Examination Competition, Keats' "Eve of St. Agnes," and Wordsworth's "Pastoral Poem."

SEVERAL of the successful candidates in the Post Card Examination series have written asking me whether, having already won a prize, they will be permitted to again compete. I am authorised to state that the competitions are quite open; there are no restrictions whatever beyond the rules, therefore candidates who have been successful in previous examinations are perfectly eligible as candidates for future examinations.

I HAVE received "Hall's Invalid Hand Book," a manual for the sick room, published by Messrs. Gilbert and Hall, chemists, Bournemouth. This is the third thousand, and it appears to be an exceeding useful little book, and although there is a suggestion of "business" throughout, it nevertheless contains many things that are bright, the recipes for the sick room being particularly good and well worth Nurses' attention. It is published at sixpence, but the publishers inform me that they will be pleased to forward a copy of the book to any Nurse on receipt of one penny stamp for postage. The title of the book should undoubtedly have been printed on the back edge; but probably the publishers will act upon this hint in their next edition.

I HAVE read the nineteenth report of the Boston Hospital, and excellent reading it is. In it I find that the Committee have during the past

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