

object of charity upon the Great Northern Hospital, had been sent away unattended to. "A reader" innocently states that his "aged friend is a gentleman of property, nearly £200 of his annual income is derived from perpetual rent charges, which he is inclined to settle benevolently, and through this treatment the Great Northern will lose some £20 per year. I cannot understand why applicants, who are willing to pay, should be turned away."

If a person would behave so meanly to the Hospital in his lifetime, the authorities need feel no fear for the very problematical loss which they might sustain from treating him as he really deserved. The letter, however, illustrates very clearly the popular belief to which we last week called attention. This gentleman of property—with or without intentions of post-mortem benevolence—has no hesitation in attempting to defraud the attending physician of the fee to which he was entitled for the benefit of his skilled advice, and the chemist who would have had to make up the prescription for the loss of his charges. Unless this man was poor, he had no right to pose as an object of charity, and it was only on the ground of poverty that he was justified in attempting to obtain a physician's advice for nothing. Such cases, however, are by no means uncommon, and, therefore, it would appear that the time has arrived for the medical profession to consider the whole question very seriously, and to take steps to prevent not only their kindness and generosity, in the form of gratuitous Hospital work, being abused, but also the damage and loss which is thereby caused to those of their brethren who are engaged in general practice. No one expects a lawyer or even a clergyman to work for nothing, and we fail to understand the reasons which could be urged with any show of justice for expecting the medical profession to give their time and skilled advice without, at any rate, some shadow of remuneration. With all respect, however, to medical men, it would seem that for the present condition of affairs they are themselves not altogether free from responsibility. Their generosity in the past has been so boundless that it has suffered the common result of being not only misunderstood, but imposed upon, and if they desire the inauguration of a better state of affairs, it must be through their own determined efforts, because through such means alone can reforms be effected. If they would unite in resolutely declining to prescribe for Hospital patients, who are able to pay for medical advice, they would in a short time bring about a more healthy and just appreciation of the benefits conferred upon the public by the whole profession. For, unfortunately, it cannot be disputed that the British public, above all other people, value any thing at precisely the price which they are called upon to pay for it.

LADY INSPECTORS.

It required a good deal to educate public opinion before the appointment of women as inspectors was carried into effect. Since that was done, however, they have so completely vindicated the propriety of their selection, especially in the case of factories or workshops in which women are employed, and so conclusively proved the success and thoroughness with which their duties have been performed, that the opposition which, upon theoretical and sex differences, was formerly urged, is now rarely or never heard. But there remains a remnant of the old-fashioned prejudice against the employment of women in any public official positions, which will, perhaps, die less easily. This is well shown in the methods pursued by a Metropolitan Vestry. They have so far moved with the times as to appoint lady inspectors, and, doubtless, have found to their surprise the wisdom of such a step; but they have hesitated to carry their decision to its logical conclusion, and have declined to invest their lady inspectors with the full status and rights which their male colleagues demand and receive. The Vestry admit that the ladies have done their work excellently, and that the workplaces in the parish at which women are employed have never been better supervised than they have been since that duty was entrusted to women. But instead of appointing these ladies "during the pleasure of the Vestry," or, in other words, as permanent officers, they insist upon re-appointing them annually, and refuse to recognize them as fully qualified sanitary inspectors. Now this involves two important principles. Either the Vestry are neglecting their duty to the ratepayers, by appointing persons who cannot be trusted, and whom, therefore, they are obliged to keep on trial for only limited periods, or they have no justification whatsoever for not appointing them as permanent officials. Again, the Vestry are either deliberately employing ladies who are not thoroughly qualified to perform the duties for which they are paid; or, if these ladies are, as we have every reason to believe they are, excellently fitted for the positions they hold, then the Vestry have no moral, even if they have a legal, right to refuse to recognize them as sanitary inspectors.

THE POLITICAL WIDOW.

Parliament is about to consider a Bill to equalize the rates paid in different parts of the Metropolis. It is impossible to deny that there are grave objections against, as well as strong reasons for, the passing of such an Act, but the objectors would be wise not to weaken their case by the argument that such legislation will injuriously affect the poor widow. We know that widow; she comes from Sheffield. And whenever an argument is wanted to protect capitalists or financiers or other persons who are exceedingly well able to take care of themselves, the poor lone widow invariably makes her appearance. She was to be ruined when Mr. Goschen reduced the interest on Consols; the Irish Land Act was to make her homeless; and now, if the rates are equalized, she is, apparently, to become, instead of an assistance as heretofore to the State, a burden upon her fellow-parishioners—as an inmate of the workhouse.

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