

WE hear that the result of the Local Government Board inquiry at the Lewisham Infirmary has resulted in the decision that the Matron is to be permitted to return on duty on probation for six months. This we consider a very unfortunate recommendation, as, if the Local Government Board after inquiry judged that the Matron was to blame, her resignation should have been called for. And if she was in the right she should have been exonerated and reinstated. We hope, therefore, that Miss Pattison will refuse to be placed in a false position, and that she will decline to accept so invidious an office; especially as it is stated that for the future all members of the Nursing Staff of the Lewisham Infirmary are to be engaged through the Clerk of the Guardians and are not to be selected by the Matron; so that there is no immediate possibility that proper discipline in the Infirmary amongst the female staff will be maintained, or any hope that an efficient nursing school can be inaugurated. The sick poor in the Lewisham Infirmary wards will be the first and greatest sufferers.

AN inquest was lately held on the body of Christian Leong, aged 70 years, an inmate of the Holborn Union Infirmary, who died suddenly. Florence Hallister, a Nurse at the Infirmary, deposed that the patient got up at seven o'clock, and while walking along the corridor he dropped suddenly dead. The witness had charge of eight wards on night duty, which contained 401 men. We are glad to observe that a juryman remarked that it was a disgrace to expect a woman to do so much, and also that the resident medical officer, Dr. Everitt Norton, under examination, stated that "there was not an Infirmary in London that had a sufficient Nursing Staff." However, as charity begins at home, the sooner this gentleman makes a strong protest against the present nursing arrangements to the Local Government Board if the Holborn Guardians refuse to reform matters, the better.

WE are glad to learn from our colleagues that several first class candidates have applied for the vacant post of Matron to the Kimberley Hospital, Cape Colony. This is as it should be, and we rejoice to learn that rumours of difficulties to be encountered have not deterred some of our most capable Nurses from offering their services for the benefit of the sick in our South African Colony. Indeed if we know the true British Nurse, such an intimation will only make her the more eager to go forth and help to right a wrong; and we feel sure that work courageously undertaken in a spirit of self-for-

getfulness for the good of others, will inevitably overcome whatever difficulties may be found to exist.

WITH reference to our remarks last week concerning the nursing of rural Fever Hospitals, the following notes from a correspondent in Scotland are of interest:—

"The following advertisement appears in a current number of the *Scotsman*:—

BURGH OF STIRLING,  
WANTED by the Authority of the Burgh of Stirling, a MAN and his WIFE to take charge of the Infectious Hospital. Wife to do the washing and assist in nursing. Husband to assist Sanitary Inspector in his duties.—Apply, &c.

The 'Authority of the Burgh of Stirling' have somewhat primitive views as to their responsibility towards the sick fever patients under their care. It is interesting to note that the washing is put first, and the assistance in nursing is thrown in as an after-thought. Presumably in the opinion of these good gentlemen the knowledge of laundry work is considered to be much more of a fine art than a knowledge of sick nursing. It requires very little imagination to conjure up a vision of the good old soul who will probably be appointed, and who will accept with untroubled conscience the double fealty of devotion to the wash-tub and attention to the sick.

One can mentally see her, with sleeves rolled up to the elbow, vigorously pounding away at sheets and counterpanes, and enthusiastically rinsing, scouring, and blueing. And between whiles, at those stages in the operation when the linen may safely be left to bleach and boil in the copper, she will trot into the wards, her bonnet strings loose and flying, her shawl unpinned, wiping the soap-suds from hands and arms with her capacious but not too cleanly apron, and will then proceed to 'nursing.'

Diphtheria and typhoid cases will presumably be treated in this Infectious Hospital, and their care will partly devolve on this most respectable old washerwoman, whose sympathies and interests will necessarily lie more in the direction of clear-starching and ironing than in the more abstract features of the dieting of a fever patient, or the treatment of a 'trachy.' Speaking seriously, it is a monstrous thing that any public body should allow such untrained, unskilful hands to have any share in the professional care of the sick for whose lives and welfare they—as a constituted body—are responsible.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)