

To-day the Matron of a large Institution must be ever on the watch to keep up with the spirit of the times. There is so much change and reform going on in the systems of training—there is so much educational work—so much of progression, that the modern Matron must needs strain every nerve to keep her Hospital abreast of the general improvement. Small wonder is it, therefore, if with all this strain, the break sometimes comes. It may be a break of the health, it is occasionally, unfortunately, a break in the mind. Of course the Matron of to-day has assistants and sub-heads of different departments, to a degree unknown in the past. But the responsibility is always her own. She shares detail work, but she does not share one particle of responsibility. She is, and always must be the thinking head and the centre of the Hospital life, and it is this strain which so frequently proves too much.

There is only one way in which the burdens of a Matron's life may be lightened—by the loyal adherence of her staff, and by a cheerful upholding on their part of the authority she has to wield. Every breach of discipline, every lowering of the standard on the part of the Nurses of the professional status the Matron has established, is just one more added burden to a hard life. It is well that the public should be reminded occasionally of the trials and the hardships undergone by the Matrons of our large Hospitals, who are, generally speaking, among the most faithful of public servants. A recognition of the anxieties of the life should also lead Committees to co-operate more and more with their Matrons, and to, at all times, extend a helpful friendly sympathy with their endeavours to carry out a progressive programme in their Hospitals.

And it is also most important that the hours of work for all Hospital workers should be shortened, and leave of absence extended as far as possible, especially to those who occupy posts of authority.

WE published some time since some "curiosities in poultices." To this we must now add the novelty reported to the *British Medical Journal* by Mr. George H. Bate, House Surgeon, Queen Adelaide's Dispensary, Bethnal Green, who writes: "A young woman recently sought advice here for 'bad breast,' as she termed it. On examination it appeared that she had been suffering from acute inflammation ending in abscess. She consulted a 'doctor,' who declined to open it, but said it was much better to let it 'burst,' after which she was to apply cowdung poultices; this the woman had actually

been doing when I saw her. The above treatment is applied in many cases in country districts to horses with sore backs, &c., but it is the first time probably that readers of the *British Medical Journal* have heard of it being applied to abscess of the breast."

A LOCAL Government enquiry has been held in the Isle of Wight, into the conduct of the master of a workhouse towards a Nurse engaged on the male side of the Infirmary. This Nurse gives her age as 20 years, and states that she has been "a Nurse for three years." If this be so, it is hardly necessary to point out that a strict investigation into the Nursing arrangements of this Infirmary which permits of so young a girl being put in charge of male patients, is very necessary.

A NUMBER of pupils belonging to a "young ladies' school" in New York city, desiring to honour the memory of a school-mate and friend, subscribed together to furnish a private room in one of the city hospitals, which they named after the dead girl. The benefit to the hospital was great, as the room could not be let to a private patient, funds for furnishing it not being forthcoming.

SOME of the Park Commissioners of American cities are most generous in their donations of surplus pots of flowers and shrubs, which they send to the hospitals. Many very beautiful flower-boxes are in this way kept plentifully stocked during the summer months, and thus the wards are made very attractive without any expense to the staff, who would otherwise often contribute out of their own small means.

THE late Bishop of Winchester suffered from asthma, which he described as "one of the most capricious, tenacious and distressing of all bodily complaints which do not carry with them actual pain. 'As they that watch for the morning' is a text that comes home to the poor struggler for breath during the sultry night hours; and then when sleep seems approaching an awful sense of sinking and depression comes on, something like that one fancies may immediately precede the final struggle—and sleep flies away over the hill. How is it that Dante never introduced asthma into the 'Inferno'—either as the just punishment of loquacious persons, who make long speeches on subjects of which they are totally ignorant, or who preach sermons which are only bags of sawdust?" To anyone familiar with the sufferings consequent on asthma, the above will be recognised as most graphic.

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