

## Nursing at The National Hospital for Paralysis.

WE have instituted further enquiries concerning the matter to which we referred last week—in connection with the transformation of Matrons at the National Hospital, Queen Square—and we are informed that for weeks before the appointment much wire-pulling was the order of the day. The claims of Miss Tweed, after nearly eight years' faithful service as Sister, were naturally very strong, and were warmly supported by some of the Medical Staff, and yet there were those in high places, who felt that, as a new *régime* of Nursing would be advantageous, a well-trained stranger might take the initiative and overcome the difficulties of re-organization with more authority. The Duke of Westminster, the President of the Institution, supported Miss Fiennes Clinton—and it was practically owing to his influence that she was appointed. Then came a tug of war, and the Committee, hard pressed by certain members of the staff, gave way, and humbly begged Miss Clinton to save further trouble by sending in her resignation. This she was magnanimous enough to do—hardly relishing, we can imagine, the prospect of great opposition in her new work.

But good may come eventually out of the public attention which these extraordinary proceedings have called to the management of the National Hospital—and from a Nursing point of view they are somewhat interesting. Miss Tweed has been appointed to the disputed post, but the position is by no means a bed of roses, and she will have to take the lead in several reforms before the Nursing of the patients and the organization of the Nursing department can be considered satisfactory. We venture to hope, therefore, that she will receive the support of the Committee in her difficult task.

First of all, it would be well for the Weekly Board to take into consideration the advisability of making their Lady Superintendent (now that they have appointed a trained Nurse) the responsible head of the Nursing Department, and not merely, as she has been in the past, the subordinate official of the Secretary-Director, through whom, we are informed, the reports of her important department filter to the Committee.

We would advise the Committee of the National Hospital to make the Lady Superintendent directly subordinate to their own authority, receiving from her a written report of her own department weekly, and making it one of her duties to attend the Weekly Board in her official capacity.

From reports which have reached us also from time to time, it would seem well if the staff of Nurses were somewhat increased, especially on night duty. Many of the wards contain twenty beds, and the work of changing the bed linen of so many helpless patients—keeping them free from bed sores—cannot be comfortably done by one Nurse; and when there are severe operations in the "wing" the one Night Sister is often required in two wards at once. It is, moreover, dangerous that there should be but one Nurse in the "fit" wards, as experience in the past has distinctly demonstrated.

We are also strongly of opinion that the duties of the three administrative departments—medical, Nursing,

and secretarial—require to be clearly defined. Any supreme dictatorship is eminently undesirable in a public and charitable Institution. It is time the Committee looked into these matters, and we have good reason to believe that they would do well to begin by abolishing the obsolete custom of paying patients being admitted by the Secretary instead of by the medical staff.

## Some Humours of Popular Prescribing.

BY MISS ANNESLEY KENEALY.

THE public dearly loves to get a prescription free. Medical advice gratis is something to be sought far and near. At dinner-parties, doctors and Nurses have continually to be guarding themselves against advice on health and disease being forcibly extracted from them between the courses, from hosts and guests alike; while at afternoon teas, anxious enquirers with refractory livers and rebellious digestions, demand information on the stomachic compatibility of "Scotch bun" and angel-cake. Popular weeklies have "Chats" with a doctor; "Half Hours on Health," &c.; and, interlarded with vague hints on ventilation, and unguarded views on scientific questions (plainly written by a lay pen), are given prescriptions for every ill under the sun. Unwary persons believe they have only to get these mixtures made up, and they will promptly be relieved from every ache and pain. In some cases the chemists, as well as the doctors, are defrauded, full instructions being given as to the home-dispensing of these nostrums.

Nursing is also dealt with in a very light and airy fashion in a popular "corner," and the most mischievous advice is given in the case of the sick by writers whose elementary knowledge is self-confessed. Such advice to "young mothers" is given, as makes one devoutly hope it will never be taken seriously. In a "popular penny," diphtheria is thus discussed:—

"Diphtheria is caused either by drinking bad water, living in vitiated atmosphere, bad drainage, poor and improper food, contagion, or in fact, anything that vitiates the air and depresses the system."

Here the cause is summed up easily enough. Next comes the Nursing.

We are advised to—

"Keep the little one on a low diet, beef tea, milk, arrow-root, &c. If he is old enough to know how to use a gargle, let him gargle his throat with a solution of Condy's fluid."

Further on the writer says:

"In diphtheria it is most difficult to say when the patient is out of danger; he may appear to be going on very well, when perhaps a little carelessness may cause a relapse and occasion for grave anxiety, or probably before a few more hours are over, carry off our precious darling."

And it seems just as well to remind the lady who thus discourses on diphtheria, that "the precious darling" would undoubtedly soon be "carried off" were it to be fed on "a low diet."

It has always been considered that croupous diph-

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