

dying. It dignifies and ennobles the woman who wears it, and so it should, for is it not "the outward and visible sign" of the noblest profession open to womankind to-day?

Nursing at the London Hospital.

AT the Quarterly Court of Governors, held at the London Hospital last Wednesday, a considerable part of the Committee's Report dealt, as usual, with Nursing matters; a fact which, together with the marked improvements which have been, and are being, made in the Nursing Department of this Institution, is a flattering testimony to the benefits accruing from the crusade initiated before the House of Lords Committee, in 1890, against the grave abuses which were then proved to exist.

The preliminary instruction given at Tredegar House to would-be Probationers of the Hospital, has had striking results; seven sets of twenty Probationers each have been admitted during the first year of its working, and of these one hundred and forty, only sixty-six have satisfied the authorities, and proved themselves eligible for admission as Probationers into the Hospital. A more striking proof of the extreme necessity for a preliminary education—and indeed for the institution of a definite curriculum of Nursing education generally, as a means of protecting the sick poor first, and the sick rich afterwards, from inefficient Nurses—could hardly have been advanced.

We have watched the experiment at Tredegar House with the greatest interest, and congratulate the Committee upon the results which they are achieving, and which will do much in the near future to enforce the adoption of a uniform system of education for Nurses in this country, with its necessary corollary, the State Registration of Trained Nurses.

The new Nursing Home at the London Hospital, which is to accommodate seventy-five Nurses, is rapidly approaching completion; the large increase of the Nursing Staff, by the way, which has been made in the last six years, being a complete proof of the justice of the assertion made in 1890 that the number of Nurses was altogether insufficient for the work of the Institution. Comment was made by the Chairman and other Governors concerning the interest shown in the Nursing Section arranged by the Hospital at the East London Exhibition, and which we have already described in these columns. This is to close on Saturday next, much to the regret of the Managers of the Exhibition, who state that it has proved one of their greatest attractions.

Robbing Peter to pay Paul.

WE commend to the attention of our readers the correspondence in last week's *British Medical Journal* upon the Poor-law Officers Superannuation Bill. The letter by Mr. Rowland Humphreys puts the matter so forcibly from the Nurse's point of view that we quote it *in extenso*:

"SIR,—In expressing the satisfaction felt at the passing of the Bill for the Superannuation of Poor-law Officials, it is a pity that you have not made any remark on the harm that will be done to the Nursing of Workhouse Infirmaries by the passage of the Bill unamended. The *British Medical Journal* has taken the greatest interest in the welfare of those unfortunate persons who are reduced to the necessity of entering the Workhouse Infirmary from a combination of sickness and poverty, yet it fails to regret the blow this Act gives to their Nursing. *The Act is passed in the interest of those officials who habitually remain a long time in the Poor-law service, and totally ignores the right of those minor officials who, from the smallness of the pay accorded to them, or from the deterrent circumstances surrounding Poor-law Infirmaries, remain but a short time in the service.*" It also ignores the direct tendency the Act will have to keep officials—rendered useless by age—in the service. What use is a Nurse likely to be after 50 or 55? Yet the Act encourages her to remain till she is 65. The Act compulsorily deducts a considerable percentage from her small salary, gives her a miserable prospect if she wishes to derive any benefit from the money she is deprived (one might almost say robbed) of, and puts her still more at the mercy of Masters and Matrons of Workhouses, who are neither celebrated for their knowledge nor for their humanity, if one is to judge by the facts which come to light from time to time.

It is easy to understand that the Government has assisted the Bill through, if by the Government is meant the Local Government Board. That body has everything to gain by the suppression of the trained Nurse. Grumbling and leaving posts means work to the officials; it means awkward exposures; it means unsatisfactory inquiries by the Inspectors. But this Act means freer hands for those Guardians who do not desire to see their Infirmaries reformed, and it means more and more difficulty for those Guardians who, desirous of obtaining trained Nurses for their Infirmaries, find that they are further handicapped by this unjust Act.

If those who did the pushing of the Act would have consented to have inserted—for Nurses and the other minor officials—a clause permitting them to cut themselves out of benefits they could never hope to obtain, after a period of time which would have allowed them to see what they were about, there would have been no trouble whatever about the Act. As it is, it had to be slipped through in order to get it passed at all. I say that this Act has been obtained for the benefit, primarily, of the permanent officials of the Workhouse, and at the expense of the minor ones, who are, it is well known, an ever-changing class.

The Act works on the same principle as many of the insurance corporations who attract the poorer classes. The shareholders fatten on the payments of those who cease to keep their premiums paid up.

* The italics are ours.

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