

tion being made as to the knowledge acquired by the probationers. Still greater astonishment will be felt at the following announcement made last week in a contemporary, the Editor of which is known to be on very friendly terms with the officials of this Institution:—

“TRAINING.

I want to enter a general hospital as probationer, and would be glad to know if being a housemaid would be considered an objection?—A.M.L.”

To this the editor replied—

“In some hospitals it would be a recommendation. For instance, at the Middlesex Hospital (London, W.), Miss Thorold prefers her non-paying probationers to have been in domestic service.”

But, at the same time, this explains what has hitherto been mysterious to a large number of members of the Royal British Nurses' Association. It is well known that the Executive Committee of that Association is at present practically ruled by a little *clique* of Middlesex Hospital officials, and, as it appears they are only accustomed to dealing with Nurses drawn from the ranks of domestic servants, it completely explains the extraordinary attempts they have made to domineer over the large number of members of the Association who belong to a very different section of the community, and who have hitherto regarded the conduct of these persons merely as evidence of ignorance and ill-breeding.

There is another and very interesting aspect of the question. As we have already shown, Mr. Fardon, Miss Thorold, and their colleagues at the Middlesex Hospital, have packed the General Council of the Association with Nurses from that Institution. It occasioned great surprise that the latter should have consented to be placed in so invidious a position, for it was felt that gentlewomen would have naturally objected to be so utilised. But if the Nurses in question were originally housemaids, the mystery is at once explained, and it is quite intelligible that they may rather enjoy the position than otherwise.

It becomes increasingly important, however, for the members of the Association to consider whether they will permit such an extraordinary topsy-turveydom to continue, and whether, in fact, they are willing that the Royal Corporation of Nurses should be governed in the future by ex-housemaids. The Middlesex Hospital authorities are quite entitled to employ domestic servants in any position they choose, and if they desire their

Institution to be the portal through which that excellent body of women enter the profession of Nursing, they have doubtless realised the *prestige* which will accrue to their Hospital. But we maintain that the Nursing profession has now attained a position in which it is not only ridiculous, but intolerable, that it should be controlled by housemaids, however estimable. We would, therefore, once more advise members of this Association to remove the names of the Middlesex Nurses from the Council list sent out to them for their approval.

Annotation.

THE GRIEVANCES OF ASYLUM ATTENDANTS.

THE grievances of asylum attendants are still being ventilated in the *Daily Graphic*, and, if all that is said is true, we think there is ample ground for complaint. For instance, we gather from an account of an interview of a correspondent of the *Daily Graphic* with the matron of a lunatic asylum in the metropolitan area, that the attendants, in this asylum at all events, take their meals in the wards, and the following is his description of a dinner:—

“Two attendants, refined, pleasant-faced young women, were eating their dinner in surroundings of the most gruesome kind. Close to the table was a paralysed patient, whose language and habits it would not be desirable to describe. Other sick women, also in bed, formed the background of a meal which even to persons of elementary refinement must have proved nauseating. About forty patients altogether were in the ward, and there were cursing and screaming violence and bad language on all hands. ‘It’s a hard way to get a living,’ said one of the young women, ‘and when we read in the papers of County Council banquets we wish some of the County Councillors would come out and see how we take our dinners. One passed through the ward last week, and seeing us at dinner said, ‘What wonderful women you are. Now, I couldn’t touch a bit of food under such circumstances. One lunatic would take away my appetite. But it’s all use. Now I dare say you don’t even notice these terrible crying women and the bad air. Well, I always did say Nature made women differently from men!’ And he went away quite happy,’ continued the attendant, ‘that we “did not mind” any more than the proverbial eel its skinning. And it never seemed to occur to him that if we did not get “used” to eating dinners under these circumstances we should get none.’”

Add to this the poor pay, long hours, and the terrible strain necessarily involved in being responsible, for so many hours daily, for the care of the insane, and it will be seen that the lot of

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