

It is often said that nurses, by the care and attention that they give to the sick, repay the hospital for the cost of their board and lodging; but in this argument it is forgotten that, at the present day, and with the many special advantages in the comforts of Nursing Homes, and special dietaries, a Nursing School costs the hospital, probably, twice as much as it did formerly. The first result of this was exhibited some years ago, when probationers were first called upon to pay a guinea a week towards their board and lodging. At the present time, the probationers in Metropolitan hospitals pay about £5,000 a year in such fees, but this by no means covers their cost to the various institutions. It has, evidently, not been understood by most nurses that they are being taught a skilled calling, fitting them for an honourable and profitable life's work. Students of every other profession are required to pay for their tuition, and we have always argued that, sooner or later, this would become imperative in the case of Nursing pupils.

The increasing difficulty, with which hospitals at the present day meet their expenditure, makes it evident that they must find fresh sources of income if they are to continue to exist; and how this income is to be provided, is a matter which is arousing keen interest and discussion. The fees paid by Nursing probationers might at least be trebled, so far as the Metropolitan hospitals are concerned, without any appreciable strain upon the parents of many who are now anxious to receive such training; but, as it has been pointed out, there are two results which would follow from any marked increase in the charges made to probationers. First, that the uneducated classes would thus be excluded from such schools; and, secondly, that nursing pupils would, in return for higher fees, undoubtedly demand greater and more systematic educational advantages than they are at present afforded. We do not believe that the number of eligible probationers would be in any appreciable degree diminished; but it is undeniable that the expense of the Nursing Departments of the hospitals would be increased, probably, in equal proportion to its increased receipts from probationers' fees; and thus no definite relief would be given to the hospital's finances.

As the annual expenditure of the Metropolitan hospitals, alone, amounts every year to about £580,000, the amount obtainable from nursing fees is almost too small to be taken into serious account. The annual assured income of the

Metropolitan hospitals, according to a series of articles which have recently appeared in our valuable contemporary, the *Medical Times*, is less than £300,000 a year; leaving a deficit, therefore, to be provided each year of at least £280,000. The methods suggested by our contemporary for meeting that deficit are very ingenious, and more cogent than any proposals which we have previously observed; and we will, therefore, take an early opportunity of discussing them, at some length.

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### Annotations.

#### AN EIGHT HOURS' DAY.

A MOVEMENT is on foot to obtain an eight hours' day for the nurses at the Wandsworth and Clapham Infirmary. It has been initiated by Mr. Rogers, a member of the Wandsworth Poor Law Board, who has obtained the promise of support from some of his colleagues. If the Wandsworth Board introduce this reform, there is little doubt that other Boards will follow suit, and therefore the movement is an important one. It will at once be seen that, if the Poor Law introduces an eight hours' day for nurses, that the General Hospitals will be compelled, sooner or later, to adopt the same standard, or women desirous of entering the nursing profession will do so largely under the Poor Law, where the shorter hours prevail, and general hospitals will therefore experience some difficulty in obtaining probationers. We hope that if the eight hours' day be adopted by the Poor Law, it will be arranged by giving each nurse some hours off duty every day, and not by introducing an eight hours' shift, which has always seemed to us undesirable, as involving such a constant change of nurses for the patients. When the eight hours' day comes into force there will be ample time for nurses to attend lectures, and to learn increasingly, therefore, to take an intelligent interest in their work, as well as for ample recreation. At present, lectures are often attended when nurses are too weary to profit by them to a full extent. We shall watch the progress of the movement at Wandsworth with great interest.

#### THE WATER FAMINE.

At the meeting of the Mile End Board of Guardians, last week, it was reported that for three days the Infirmary had been without any water from the mains, and had been dependent

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