

Professional Review.

THE ST. JOHN'S HOUSE GAZETTE.

We have read with great interest the *Gazette* issued to members of the St. John's House Debating Society, which contains the papers contributed during the second half of the seventh session, and which by the kindness of the President we are enabled to review in the columns of this journal. This Society has now been affiliated with the League of St. John's House Nurses, a natural and fitting amalgamation, but it is nevertheless a matter for regret that henceforth it will only be possible to publish a few of the papers in the *St. John's House News*, for these papers are written from the standpoint of practical experience, and are full of valuable information. We note in the President's report of the past year the statement that various members have resigned on the ground that they are never able to attend the meetings. This difficulty must always exist where a Society is composed mainly of private nurses. Nevertheless the members can contribute papers, and can also have the advantage of reading those written by others. Resignation on this ground, therefore, is surely a matter for regret.

THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT.

With regard to the contribution of papers, the President writes in her report for the year:—Practice makes perfect, and it is an excellent opportunity for improving one's own mind if one sets down information in a form in which it may be imparted to others. Great results may accrue from such small beginnings; it has been said that "genius is an infinite capacity for taking pains," so, if infinite pains are spent over the papers and Debates, who knows whether St. John's House may not produce some genius! Never despise small beginnings, or think because you do not feel qualified to write some deep and learned paper, therefore you will write nothing at all. Do not let us grow mentally slothful, for our profession is one in which we *must* bestir ourselves to keep well abreast with the times.

True it is that often after arduous work we need rest and recreation, but the latter has been well defined as "change of occupation," so study may prove often to be a relaxation and a source of pleasure. Life is so full of beautiful things to learn, and is withal so short to learn them in that we cannot afford lightly to waste our opportunities, but we must dig deep ourselves into the depths of her treasures if we really want them, for knowledge can *only* be acquired personally."

NURSING IN MILITARY HOSPITALS.

Specially interesting at the present time are two papers on Nursing in Military Hospitals at Home. This, one writer says, is entirely different to that to which the civilian nurse is accustomed, and she has to shut her eyes to much which to a well-trained nurse appears unnurselike. "It is right and proper that Hospital Wards should be the pink of neatness, but in the Army the Ward's floor, paint, and general appearance comes first—patients second." The weak point we gather is the system of dual control in force. Thus the Staff Sergeants and Ward Masters "practically have the training" of the Orderlies, and it is sad to relate that the great idea impressed upon all Orderlies is—to be smart when the Commanding Officer

appears, to have all beds exactly so many inches from the walls, and the whole ward in fact like a measured plan until—the Commanding Officer's visit is over, and everything has been checked off in the Report Book as quite correct. Then—the ward may be untidy for the rest of the day." Another point is that the Sister of the Ward has no *official* control over the cleanliness or tidiness of the ward. She is not at liberty to *order* an Orderly to put it straight, but has to send for the Ward Master, and make a complaint that the ward is untidy; and the Ward Master sees that things are put straight, or if he happens to be a disagreeable man, he will tell you that the Commanding Officer was quite satisfied when he made his daily inspection, and he could not see why the Sister complained. However, the Ward Masters on the whole are very respectable men, and as a general rule will be only too willing for the Sister to take an interest in the ward, and also the Orderlies take a pride in trying to please Sister, as well as having a good report from the Colonel.

A man enlists for service in the R.A.M.C. on the same terms as those for the ordinary soldier, and no character is required. The unfortunate man may find he has no aptitude for the work and dislikes it, but having signed for three, seven, or twenty-one years, cannot get away. There is no term of probation, and probably more than half the men who enlist do so without realising in the least what their duties will be. On the other hand, intelligent men who like the work and want to learn make splendid nurses, and understand the class of men with whom they have to deal.

Another paper describes the arrangements for night duty in a Military Hospital as follows:—

"There is no regular night staff in a Military Hospital, and unless the cases are serious, the day Orderlies all go off duty at 5 p.m. (Saturdays, Sundays, and half-holidays; at 2 p.m.). A Ward Master, usually a Corporal, and one or more Orderlies then mount duty until 6.30 a.m. Their duties consist in seeing that the ward lights are lowered at 10 p.m., and in visiting the wards at stated intervals, giving special attention to any helpless cases. They spend the night in the duty room on the ground floor, and get what rest they can on the barrack beds there.

"When the Medical Officer in charge of a ward considers that any case or cases require particular care at night, the Ward Master is requested to mount special Orderlies in that Ward. Three are told off for this duty, each taking two hours in turn and being off four, as if on guard. Each Orderly is requested by the Sister of the ward to write a separate report in the book provided. These reports usually run somewhat after this style:

'All patients slept well during my tour of duty. All medicines given as ordered. Nothing further to report.

Private J. Jones,

R.A.M.C., 1st Relief'

These Orderlies have had other duties to perform during the day, either in another ward, one of the numerous offices, the stores, surgery, or cook house, so do not come on duty at 5 p.m. feeling particularly fresh. Then again, different Orderlies come on each night for nearly a week, when the first trio reappear, a most trying arrangement for both patients and Sisters."

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