

Professional Review.

LIFE AND LABOUR OF THE PEOPLE IN LONDON.

We have received the final volume of Mr. Charles Booth's classic work on the above subject, which is entitled "Notes on Social Influences." The price of the book is 5s., it is published by Macmillan and Co., Ltd., and its value is too widely recognised for it to be necessary for us to emphasise the desirability of its careful study. The following is Mr. Booth's dedication of the book, which has occupied seventeen years of his life, and which is contained in an equal number of volumes:—

"My work, now completed, has been from first to last dedicated to my wife, without whose constant sympathy, help, and criticism it could never have been begun, continued, or ended at all."

The book is too crowded with information for us to attempt, in the limited space at our disposal, to review it in detail; we prefer rather to transcribe at length the conclusions of the author on hospitals and nursing.

I.—HOSPITALS.

"The great London hospitals occupy a singularly anomalous position. They usually owe their foundation to great benefactions of the past, and fresh gifts and legacies from time to time increase the invested capital from which income is drawn. But their annual expenditure far outruns this settled income, and to supplement the funds obtained from regular annual subscribers the general public is appealed to every year to enable the management to perfect and extend the work.

"It is not as charities but as public institutions that the hospitals make their appeals. For success they even rely to some extent on steering clear of the social dangers feared in connection with eleemosynary work. It is claimed that to give to hospitals must surely be a good use of money, or at any rate quite safe to do no harm. Moreover, the co-operative basis is put forward as a ground for claiming support. Annual subscribers are privileged to recommend patients for free treatment, and the general public, to whom, if they require aid, only a nominal charge is usually made, are encouraged to provide for this possible contingency by putting what they can afford into the boxes on the Saturday and Sunday devoted to hospital collections. The appeal is wide, and has been largely responded to, but everyone is left to assess himself in the matter.

"The result has been entirely successful as regards the acceptance of the hospitals as public institutions, participation in the benefits of which involve no lack of social independence, but unsuccessful as to the amount obtained, so that the beggar's position has to be assumed by these institutions, and amongst them there arises a most unseemly struggle for popular favour.

"A very noble effort was made at the late Queen's Jubilee, suggested then, and supported and enforced since, by our present King, having for its object the provision of a capital endowment, or assured income, sufficient to lift these great institutions out of the slough of recurring deficit. But their needs continually increase, and, though to some extent allayed, the general anxiety of their position remains, while

it is scarcely possible to carry any further than has been done the appeal which has been made to all classes.

"The claim of the hospitals as public institutions is threefold in its character. First and foremost they stand ever ready to deal with the bodily injuries which cannot but occur in life, and with disease of every kind, especially when the accident or illness is of such a nature that home treatment is impossible or unsuitable. As a second claim, they become schools of surgery, medicine, and nursing. At the same time, the provision of skilled aid, available always, both to those who are admitted and to those who, as 'out-patients,' simply seek advice or medicine, leaves open the question of payment. The liability may still be left to the recipient, or to some charitable person or agency interested in the case; but, inasmuch as, whether at the call of humanity or science, the need of dealing with cases of physical injury or disease, when once presented, overpowers every other consideration, and as consequently the charges made to those who cannot afford more are nominal, if not remitted entirely, the institutions can claim support also as charities.

"I would suggest that these three distinct claims to public recognition—as great foundations, as centres of medical treatment, and as schools—may be regarded as pointing reasonably to different forms of financial resource. The establishment of institutions in which disease and accident can obtain skilled assistance and care depends on large endowments, while the current cost of treatment should be borne either by the patients themselves or by annual subscriptions and collections, which may be regarded either as co-operation or charity. But the services rendered to the community by these institutions as schools of surgery, medicine, and nursing should, I think, be recognised by a public grant.

"Thus divided, the burthen would be more definitely assumed and more lightly borne. The same division of responsibility should be reflected in the management, a general board of control being constituted on which, in addition to the trustees (who could stand for the endowments), public nominees would rightly have place both as representing the voluntary associated contributions towards maintenance, and also the Government grant. Each hospital would, doubtless, continue to have its own list of subscribers, but the amount obtained in this way, as compared with the share of the general fund, would probably decrease, and tend to become inconsiderable. For purposes of auditing, the three functions might be kept completely distinct. The items to be covered by the grant could be fixed, and all others be allotted as either capital or current expenditure. Such a division is very much needed, and, if clearly shown in the accounts, would facilitate appeals to the public (which under both heads would still be necessary), as well as tend to hold and strengthen popular interest in the management.

"The board of control, having to a considerable extent the power of the purse, would exercise an influence over the individual management likely to be very valuable, and would further the allotment of special branches of work to special institutions. The Board might also be able to arrange with the Poor Law authorities, so far as the spheres of hospitals and infirmaries overlap, and with the managers of conva-

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