

The moment she returned from one case, she would be hurried off to another. The expenses of the Home would become practically nothing at all—in fact, as no Nurse would ever sleep in the Home, it might, to all intents and purposes, be closed and cease to exist, and all the business details be carried on in the offices of the Hospital. Then, with such a stress, the number of the Nurses, one can easily imagine, would soon amount to, say, three hundred. Each would receive, say, £30 per annum, and earn a pound a week for fifty weeks out of each twelve months, the Institution, therefore—allowing £3 per annum per Nurse for uniform—clearing £17 each year from each Nurse's work—in other words, receiving from this source an income of £5,000 a year! Would this be allowable? If not, would the amount to be charged the public be still further diminished, and the demand for the Nurses still further increased, till at last the Hospital became merely an adjunct to the vast Private Nursing business carried on in its name?

There is surely no necessity to prove at further length how impracticable it would be, under existing circumstances, for any Hospital to lower the charges for its Private Nurses below those enforced by other institutions. But the argument shows how important is the question to the welfare of the Private Nurses of a Hospital. At present, in few places is the stress of work so great as to prevent a Nurse, coming back from an arduous case, having a few days' rest in the Home. And if it be urged that a Hospital should not make money from a purely business undertaking, we can easily produce a plan whereby general advantage might be secured, and the objection obviated.

Let the employées of the Home be paid upon a liberal scale to begin with, with an increase of salary each year they remain in the service of the Institution. Let all the profits of the undertaking be set aside and invested to form a Pension Fund, and from this let Nurses who have faithfully served the Hospital—say for twenty years—receive a good annuity. It would probably be amply able to give such Nurses a retiring allowance of a pound a week—a small return, after all, for such long years of good and honourable service freely rendered.

And what would be the natural and inevitable result of such a measure as this? The Hospital would not only attract, but it would bind, to itself the best class of workers, to its own great credit, the greater satisfaction of its Medical Staff, and the greatest benefit to its patients. The vacancies in its Private Nursing Home would be filled by the very best of its Staff Nurses, who would therefore enhance, far and wide, the reputation of the Institution amongst the general public. And not only so, but as a first-class article can always

command its price in this commercial country, it is almost certain that, after a time, the Committee of the Institution would be advised to increase the charges for their Nurses in accordance with the increased value and prestige they had gained.

To our minds, this appears a far more possible and desirable consummation than any reduction in the scale of charges, which, putting aside all other considerations, would, it must be remembered in this connection, at once be accepted by the public at large as a matter of business. Thousands of shrewd men would argue, "Such and such a Hospital supplies Nurses, but charges less for them than this Home, that Institution, or that other Hospital does for its employées—of course because they are inferior Nurses." It is quite fair, for what other criterion of quality but price do people generally employ?

Consequently, our consideration of this side of the matter leads us plainly to these conclusions. Firstly, that it would be bad for Nurses, worse for Nursing, and worst of all for the better-class sick, if Hospitals were to lower their charges for their Private Nurses. Secondly, that it would be good for the sick—whether rich or poor—better for Hospitals, and best for their Nurses, if all the profits of the Nursing Home could be set aside to form such a Pension Fund as we have described. And thirdly, that it is most improbable that any Hospital will ever reduce the charges to the public for its Private Nurses below those demanded by similar Institutions, whether public or private in character.

PRIZE ESSAY COMPETITION.—VI.

"GIVE A DESCRIPTION, WITH FULL DETAILS, OF THE UNIFORMS AND MOST SUITABLE CLOTHING FOR THE NURSING STAFF OF A HOSPITAL."

By MRS. KATHARINE E. GAY.

IN dealing with this subject—a large and important one—it seems advisable to thoroughly discuss the uniform and clothing of each grade in Hospital work separately, commencing with the Matron, or Lady Superintendent, who, being the most important and responsible person in any Nursing centre, whether of Hospital, Infirmary, or Home, is justly entitled to the first consideration.

Before entering into the details of this subject, there are a few remarks which suggest themselves as appropriate to the occasion. No one who has spent any considerable time in the active work of a Hospital can ignore the important fact, that if the chief aim and object of Nursing progress is to

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