

one reply. It must, therefore, be conceded that, on the whole, the principle of paying Probationers has been adopted with benefit to Hospitals and to the Nursing profession. The question, therefore, narrows itself to this: Should Probationers at large training schools be required to pay for the entire term of their training, instead of, as now, for only a few months of that time? Because there is no necessity, at the present moment, to consider the question so far as it affects the smaller Hospitals, and particularly those special Hospitals which can give no training in general nursing. These Institutions, we believe, will, in the future, become most valuable post graduate schools for trained Nurses who desire to undertake some special branch of work; and they, therefore, would, probably, share in the general effect which would be produced throughout the Nursing world if the system in question became generally adopted. But, at present, the matter need only be discussed, as it affects the chief training schools.

We believe that the suggestion was first publicly made by ourselves, some few years ago, when giving evidence before a Select Committee of the House of Lords, and the opinions then expressed have been fortified by much that has subsequently occurred. There is a plethora of candidates for admission into large Hospitals; and when admitted these women require to be boarded, fed, and properly taught. — For the first year at least the value of their labour is not worth their expense to the Institution. At the end of their training, in the majority of cases, they depart, and their skilled work is lost to the Hospital. The whole system appears to be founded on an erroneous economic basis, and this, indeed, is recognized by many Committees, who strive to repair the error by either utilizing the Nurse during her period of training, or by binding her to serve for a further term at the end of her training, as a private Nurse—in other words, as a source of revenue. The bad effects of this system are notorious, and might be expected; because a lack of equity is not the cure for administrative mistakes. Charitable Institutions should not undertake commercial speculations; and to admit an untried worker, teach, feed and board her in the expectation that if her health lasts, and if she proves capable, she will some day return a good dividend, is nothing but sheer speculation.

The analogy of other professions again teaches that those are the most independent and most honourable in which students pay for their education, and are free to work themselves as soon as they become qualified to practise. In other aspects, the benefits of such a system appears still more obvious, and we cannot but believe that it is only a question of a short time, when all the leading Nurse Training Schools will follow the example now set by University College Hospital, and will

charge definite fees to every nursing student. The inevitable result will be that the best educated gentlewomen, who desire to enter the profession, will go to these Schools; their fathers will pay for the education of their daughters, as they now pay for that of their sons. As one of our correspondents wisely suggested, would be the case, the experiment will be tried by the largest Hospitals, and once it has succeeded will soon become generally enforced. When the training is finished the graduated pupil will be independently able to follow her profession for her own sole pecuniary benefit. It appears to us probable that the system will soon be adopted by the larger London and Provincial Hospitals; the amount of the premium, of course, varying very largely according to the importance of the Training School. This question lays at the root of the matters relating to the curricula of training which will next be discussed, because it is manifest that the limit of expense to which Hospitals can go on behalf of their Nursing Staffs has now been reached; and that, if further advantages in the way of education, accommodation, or luxuries, are required by Nursing students in the future, these must not be defrayed from monies subscribed for the benefit of the sick poor, but must be paid for by the Probationers themselves.

On behalf of our readers all over the world we tender our thanks to those ladies who have so ably expressed their views on the matter; and we would express the hope that even more of our readers will take part in future discussions amongst Matrons in Council.

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#### COMING EVENTS.

THESE are proverbially supposed to cast their shadows before. In that case, there can be no further question that, before very long, the anomaly of the British Franchise, so far as women are concerned, will speedily be removed. On the 16th inst., the present Government sustained its first real defeat in the House of Commons on an amendment, moved by Mr. Walter MacLaren, on the Parish Councils Bill, to the effect that women who are duly qualified should be permitted to vote for the election of Councillors. This was carried against the Government by a majority of 21 in a House of 273 members, a fact which, combined with the recent enfranchisement of women in New Zealand, is one of the highest significance. If women unite, and organise, there can be no doubt that the present slur upon their citizenship would speedily be removed. Whether women would use their votes wisely, or whether they would use them at all, if they were accorded the right, is a matter on which there may be much difference of opinion. But it is impossible to justify the fact that, so far as the franchise is concerned, women should be classed, in the eyes of the law, with lunatics and criminals, and that they should be called upon to pay rates and taxes, but be denied a vote or a voice in the administration of the Empire to whose support they contribute.

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