

So anxious, however, was the Institution to satisfy its critics, that it now proposed to place the two departments under separate Committees, to retain all charitable gifts solely for the use of the district Nurses; and beyond all this it was agreed that a debt of £250 on account of the latter section should be taken over and repaid, as funds permitted, by the Committee of the private Nursing department.

Such is the scheme proposed, seconded, and apparently unanimously agreed to. Put into plain English what does it mean?—that the debt on the district nursing of Leicester is, in future, to be made a first charge on the earnings of the Nurses themselves; that the private Nurses must be underpaid in order that the profits on their labour may be devoted to charity. Because, it is manifest that if these women were paid a fair proportion of their earnings, there would not be much profit; and, moreover, if justice were done, whatever profits there were should be set aside to form pensions, and other benefits, for those by whose exertions the funds had been obtained. This scheme can mean, therefore, nothing else than that the private Nurses of the Leicester Institution are to be called upon to pay, in part, for the nursing of the sick poor in the districts of that town. We observe that Committees have been appointed, but it is not stated that the consent of the private Nurses has been obtained to the proposed scheme.

Legally, the Institution is doubtless within its powers in thus dealing with this question. Morally, we have no hesitation in saying that it has introduced an indefensible principle, and that the townspeople of Leicester will be gravely to blame if it is acted upon. Nurses are working women—who have, by the nature of their calling, only a few years of active life wherein to make provision for their old age; so few years, in fact, that, in most instances, they are quite unable to make any such provision for themselves. It is our duty, therefore, as the recognized organ of the profession, to protest, as strongly as possible, against the assumption, involved in this Leicester scheme, that Nurses are marketable commodities from whom it is right and just to make as large profits as possible. To our mind, it is as bad, or even worse, to sweat Nurses in the name of charity as for commercial purposes; and we cannot but hope that when this aspect of the question is brought before the Leicester Committee, that they will take the necessary steps to remove the proposed debt from the shoulders of the private Nurses, and, in future, provide that those who desire to promote district Nursing in that town shall do so at their own cost, and not at the charge of working women, who well-deserve all they earn themselves, and cannot afford to be, and certainly should not, without their own consent, be called upon to become, the vicarious philanthropists of a wealthy town.

#### NURSES' RECREATION.

IF any class in the community needs rest and recreation, Nurses do, in a pre-eminent degree; because, with the one possible exception of medical men, no other workers perform such arduous, responsible, and depressing duties for so many hours daily, or nightly, as fall to their lot. Yet this very fact, while making the necessity for repose and change imperative, renders the choice of recreation in their case more limited than in that of others. For example, if they are to be on duty early in the morning—as they must be, at least, in Hospitals—balls, and such like festivities, which consume the greater part of the night, and leave the pleasure seeker exhausted for the following day, are impossible for them. Their duty demands that they shall avoid anything and everything which will diminish their physical ability to perform their work efficiently. And if this is necessary to the trained Nurse, it is to a still greater extent needful so far as Probationers are concerned, because, as a general rule, it is more important that she should economise her strength to meet the novel strain to which it is subjected, especially during the early months of her pupilage; as she becomes inured, and so to speak acclimatised, to ward routine she will be better able to bear the extra fatigue of pleasure making. We are led to make these remarks by a sensible letter from a correspondent, which appears in another column this week, and because the matter has certainly not hitherto received the attention which its importance requires. Indeed, it is a subject upon which our readers might express their opinions with much advantage. As a general rule, it might almost be laid down, that Probationers, in their first and second years, would be wise to avoid late evening entertainments of any description, except in their holidays. Those who have made and observed this rule, have, to our knowledge, found much practical benefit in the conservation of their health. Without attempting to particularise the form of recreation best suited to individual Nurses, it has been said, with much truth, that the most valuable method of recreation is—reading in bed (though never by candle-light)—interesting the tired mind while resting the tired body.

#### PERFECT INCURABLES.

THE annual meeting of the Royal Hospital for Incurables was held last week, and the Committee reported upon the results of the inquiry which had been made into the stringent criticisms passed upon their management in the report of the Select Committee of the House of Lords last year. If it be granted that—as it was currently reported at the time—the allegations advanced “against this Institution emanated from a small and malicious clique, who had axes of their own to grind,” and concerning which we express no opinion; it does not, in our judgment, affect the undoubted fact that their lordships, after most careful consideration, made in regard to this and to another Institution certain very sensible suggestions, and that in this, as in the other case, those suggestions have been conspicuously ignored. The Lords' Select Committee, we cannot but think, therefore, would do well to take steps to prove that the reforms, which they suggested, were imperatively necessary; and, in view of the public importance of the matter, the Committee might, with advantage, be re-constituted next session, with powers to investigate the present state of these Hospitals, and to report in greater detail the necessity which exists for the reforms in question.

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