

## "PLEASE GIVE"

across them, and the huge sign at the back of the Hospital "Supported by Voluntary Contributions." The Sisters carefully warn Nurses against complaining when speaking of the Hospital, lest their words might prejudice possible donors to the place. The necessity for funds is constantly before one's eyes. The report states, "Every effort is made to conduct the Hospital on the most strictly economical basis, and to prevent any abuse of its resources as a charity."

In reply to this I am forced to state that either the managers of the London Hospital have made a mis-statement or they do not know the condition of things in the wards. One of the first things that attracted my notice was

## THE WASTE OF GOOD FOOD

in the wards—it is simply shocking. Fresh bread is taken each morning to the wards, each loaf is cut in two and every patient is given half a loaf; the bread of yesterday is taken from the lockers which stand at the head of each bed, and put in a basket behind the scullery door, and the remaining *fresh* half loaves which are over are thrown into the same basket to be carted away as refuse bread. When one considers the cost of fresh white bread, the quantity thrown away from some sixty wards each day for a year must make a great item in the expenditure, and the saving of it might be very great if a little care and economy were exercised in the supervision of the Hospital. Every day quarts of milk are wasted in the wards. The milk is placed in open mugs on the lockers, and not being covered soon gets tainted from the unhealthy atmosphere of the wards. When the milk is not taken by the patient it must be thrown out, and if later the patient asks for it the mug must be refilled. The patients, especially in medical wards, often do not drink the milk when it is given to them, and I was frequently asked for "A fresh mug of milk, because this has been standing open." Every day there is enough milk wasted in the London Hospital to save the lives of dozens of little starving children and babies in Whitechapel. I have been told to throw away quantities of milk, and have seen other Nurses do the same. After dinner has been served, some of the beef-tea and soup are saved for the evening, and then the pails, containing quantities of this excellent food, are emptied into the scullery sink! The first day I witnessed this I asked the ward-maid "why the soup and beef-tea were not given to the poor people outside the Hospital?"

"Humph! It would be as much as my place is worth to say so," she said. "I know enough to mind my own business, I do." Which gentle hint I took, and asked no more questions.

In some of the wards quantities of beef or mutton remain over after the patients have been served each noon. It is taken to the scullery; the ward-maid cuts off a few bits for herself, and the rest is thrown away. Potatoes come into the wards in net sacks and are peeled in the lobby by the Nurses. When sufficient are distributed on the patients' plates the rest—dozens of hot, whole potatoes—are dumped into the waste tub. Sometimes quantities of greens share the fate of the potatoes, and quantities of untouched rice and custard puddings, are thrown, with the scrapings of the plates, and often the tealeaves, into the waste tub. Whole pieces of fried fish that have been offered to patients and not touched follow suit. One Nurse informed me she had seen a custard pudding with only a corner taken out—a single portion—tipped into the waste tub in similar fashion.

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This is appalling—no wonder the Hospital spends £40,000 a year more than its invested income, and that quinquennial demands for one hundred thousand pounds are made—a guinea subscription would be speedily swallowed up in that omnivorous waste tub, and how many of such are given by those who deprive themselves of some necessity to know the pleasure of helping the poor and needy? One can hardly wonder that the Hospital world finds 'money so tight.' We are told one practice the management has is—

## DEALING UNFAIRLY WITH THE PROBATIONERS

who go to the hospital expecting to be graduated after two years of experience in the wards, and given a certificate to that effect. I found that some of these Probationers are smiled upon and converted into 'Sisters' before their term of apprenticeship has been served (over the heads of the staff Nurses who have been several years at the Hospital), and, as Sisters, they have either to teach their fellow-apprentices, or fill various posts in the business rather than nursing departments of the Hospital. Others are sent out to do private nursing that they may bring two guineas per week to the coffers of the institution while they are receiving salaries of only from twenty to thirty shillings per month. In such manner Probationers are made to miss the experiences in the treatment of a variety of maladies that are only to be found in the wards of a Hospital, and they also miss the doctor's lectures. I heard lectures given by a doctor that were most instructive, and ought to have been heard by all the pupils instead of only part of them. One of the lectures touching upon the transmission of infection, disinfectants and how to use them, might have been heard to advantage by the managers of the Hospital themselves, for I was told while there that the Sister who is in charge of Blizard Erysipelas ward is also the Sister for the Isolation ward, where there are cases of scarlet fever, measles, and diphtheria, so that, presumably, she must be constantly carrying about various infectious germs with her.

Somehow, it does not seem quite in accordance with the eternal fitness of things that a charitable institution should carry on a business, and, if a Hospital is 'Supported by Voluntary Contributions,' it seems somewhat extraordinary that it should make people involuntarily pay a great deal for an inferior article. By this I mean that

## PROBATIONERS WHO ARE ONLY HALF-TRAINED APPRENTICES

are deprived of their regular training and sent out to care for private patients as if they were thoroughly-trained Nurses—and the risk of unconscious blundering on the part of untrained Nurses are many. This was illustrated recently by the poisoning case at Bengoe College. From the accounts of the Hospital for the last year, I learn that over seventeen hundred pounds were made as the profits of the private nursing business. Why should any woman be utilized as a Nurse or an attachée of the London Hospital private staff, and while earning about two guineas per week be paid at the rate of from 7s. 8d. to 10s. per week as her share of her earnings. Such a system of sweating, depriving a person of three-fourths of her earnings, would call forth a public outcry in any other than a charitable institution. Nor do I consider it fair and straightforward dealing that Nurses who go to the hospital for two years should be asked in advance to promise to stay a third year 'at the option of the Matron,' which means that she works blindly for two years, and then 'at the option of the matron' may be dismissed at once. or,

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