

board covered with notices of lectures on all the details of Nursing, from bandaging to making a bed, and the names of the Probationers who were expected to attend. "Is not that a final proof that they are being taught?"

I was forced to admit that it seemed a very strong proof.

IS THE FOOD WASTED?

"Again, she charges us with waste, disorder, uncleanness, and want of proper disinfection." She says that food is thrown away. In so large an establishment, with fastidious patients, many of them suffering from infectious disorders, some fragments must occasionally be thrown away, if only to prevent danger of infection. She says, 'Why not give them to the poor?' It is an old cry, but does she expect us to add the duties of retail distributors or salesmen to our already overburdened backs? If we distributed food in front of this Hospital, we should have such a nuisance as would bring us under the censure of the local authorities. If the Salvation Army or any other body would like our fragments, they are welcome to remove them; but I warn them that there is precious little to spare. Come and see this dreadful waste and disorder."

And Mr. Roberts then took me into the wards, to test on the spot the truth of his assertions. I went straight to the pails of rubbish which stand in every ward, expecting to see them chokeful with every variety of dainty food. There was not a sign in them of any food at all. The Sisters and Nurses expressed the greatest surprise and indignation when I questioned them about this waste. 'Bread thrown away? Look at this pannier, where the surplus of to-day's bread is being kept for to-morrow. Greens and good meat thrown away? Never heard of such a thing. Milk wasted? We are forced to keep in a good supply, both of milk and ice—the chief food of bedridden patients—but there is no more waste than is absolutely necessary if the patients are to be always supplied with milk on the spot. Have you ever been ill and known what the craving for ice and milk is?'

'It is perfectly clear, of course,' added Mr. Roberts, 'that these things must go by averages, and that, in order to be sure that you shall never fall short, you must be content to sometimes exceed. It is better that the patients should have too much milk than too little.'

My visit, of course, was entirely unannounced.

THE 'DESTRUCTOR' AND 'DISINFECTOR.'

Turning from this to other points, I asked Mr. Roberts very closely about the arrangements for disinfection. He took me with great pride to see his latest institutions in that line. For getting rid of infected bandages and rubbish he has a huge 'destructor'—a great furnace, which is continually burning, and fed by pailfuls of rubbish which are brought here straight from the various wards. It saves him, he says, £100 a year in the transport of rubbish. He has also built a 'disinfector' of the most elaborate type. It consists of two rooms, entirely separated, except by a steam-press. One man puts the clothes into the steam-press at one end, and, after being completely disinfected, they are taken out by another man in the other room.

ARE THE NURSES OVER-WORKED?

As I passed through the wards I kept my eyes open to observe very closely the amount of truth that lies in the charge of overworking the Nurses. I was myself once an in-patient in the London Hospital for more than a week; and though the information thus obtained is very slight, I can remember that while impressed with the cleanliness, punctuality, and economy of the Hospital, the hours of the Nurses seemed to me irksomely long in consideration of the stress of their work. Roughly speaking, those hours are twelve a day or night,

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more or less. The day Probationers go on duty at seven o'clock, and go off at nine, but have two hours off duty in addition to half-an-hour for dinner, and time for tea in the wards. The night Probationers are in the wards from 9.20 p.m. to 9.20 a.m., with scarcely a break, and dining at 10 a.m.

YES, AT NIGHT WORK.

I do not think the day duty is excessive. The work in the afternoons is very light, and, generally speaking, patients are less restive in the day time. As I walked through the wards with Mr. Roberts, I noticed that most of the Nurses were resting and chatting. But the night-work is certainly very long and very arduous. In a fever-ward, where all the stress comes at night, it is undoubtedly too great a strain for the number of Nurses left in charge. It is easy to exaggerate this, but these are my own conclusions after being a patient in the Hospital. But this charge of overwork lies at the doors of all the great Hospitals, and it is useless to make a special attack on the London until the whole system is changed to the eight-hour shift. The Hospital Committees are quite ready to do it if the public will give them the funds.

ARE THEY COMFORTABLE?

The ex-probationer makes a special point of the fact that the Nurses are badly housed, that they are forbidden to make any complaints, and that they are promoted arbitrarily and by a system of favouritism.

Of course I cannot speak finally on any of these points, but here are some facts on the other side. The Nurses at the London have an admirable "home," where each Nurse has a separate room which, though small, looks thoroughly comfortable. They have a large airy dining-room, where they dine together once a day. They have a large sitting-room. They have a separate kitchen, and every possible arrangement for clean and good cooking, storing, and washing. What I suspect is that the ex-probationer has taken certain exceptional cases of overcrowding, regrettable in themselves, and exaggerated them into ruling cases. For, apart from hours, there seems no reason why the Nurses at the London should not be thoroughly comfortable. They have a large garden to sit in; they can see their friends any day; while the "sisters," or heads of wards, have especial rooms for themselves.

THE MATRON'S RULE.

A more difficult point is raised by the second charge—that the Venetian system of "no complaints" prevails. There is no doubt that Miss Luckes, the Matron, is a strong ruler with a weak committee, who, having raised the Hospital from a very low grade during her long tenure of office, holds a position of great strength and power in the Hospital. She is virtually an autocrat, and, however well she may wield such great powers, she is certain to slip sometimes. She has very definite views on the strength of character required for good Nursing, and it is hardly probable that "ex-probationer's" spirit of enquiry seemed to her an adequate outfit. If you have a strong, and on the whole, good government you must expect to find grievances.

But if Nurses wish to complain, the matron is not the only quarter to go to. The deputy-matron is the most charming and sympathetic of ladies, and assured me that she was always ready to listen to grievances; and the house-governor seems to be trusted by everyone. Why not go to these? But, of course, in every Hospital there will be Nurses who will morbidly cherish imaginary grievances, and will not reveal them from an instinctive sense that they would not bear the light.

As for the charge that Probationers should not be made

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