

I beg you will consider all this, and I appeal to any officer who knows India to question its truth if he can. Your suggestion to utilise the married women of the battalions is quite impossible. There are in fact no spare women in any battalion nowadays to do such work, or even to provide midwives or Nurses for the Hospitals for the women and children. If a proper corps of "Unattached List soldiers" was formed in India by special selection from the battalions there, a very good body of men could be developed. If a man committed himself he could be sent back to his regiment, and only reliable men retained. Sir James Hanbury, the P.M.O. in Madras, has pressed this matter on the Indian authorities, but without success. I beg you will use your influence to secure this most needful improvement.

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MISS McVITIE writes from Calcutta, India:—

"I have been thinking of opening a Nursing Home (Private) on the Co-operative system. Any Nurses desirous of working in India, and having some little means of their own (paying their own expenses out), could manage to live very comfortably and cheaply together in a 'Chummeny,' as they call it, out here—all uniting to pay rent, taxes, and servants, and board when at home. I know a lady (who nursed some time for Lady Roberts)—a doctor's widow—who is most anxious to come and join me, and she would undertake the house-keeping while the members of the Nursing Staff went out. Here, there is always plenty of work for good Nurses, and I know the medical men. The training of the girls of this country is most unsatisfactory: they will not work, and are, as a rule, most unreliable and untrustworthy. Will you kindly air my views about the Private Nursing Home on Co-operative lines for India in your Journal, so that those Nurses desirous of coming out might know with whom to communicate on the subject should they be inclined to try their fortunes in the Far East. *Thoroughly-trained* Nurses are *urgently* needed. I feel sure such an Institution would succeed, as I have many friends, lay and medical, in India, being an officer's daughter who knows the climate well, and can manage the native servants".

We are glad to give publicity to Miss McVITIE'S letter. She is an excellent thoroughly-trained and registered Nurse, and we feel sure that it would be wise for any Nurses wishing to go to India to place themselves in communication with her.

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ON Friday afternoon last, Mr. CLINTON DENT delivered an introductory address of a very interesting character to the Nursing staff of St. George's Hospital. In a clear and graphic manner he traced the gradual development of the Nursing department of the Hospital from the early days of its foundation, in the year 1733, to the beginning of the present century. St. George's Hospital at that time was quite in the country, surrounded by green fields, and approached by bye-lanes, unfrequented save by foot-pads and similar gentry. An amusing description was given by the lecturer of the objections raised by many to its situation on the plea of its being "so far from town." The Nurses, who numbered six originally, were paid the munificent sum of £6 per annum, with a gratuity at Christmas, varying in amount, at the discretion of the Board of Management, from £2 to £6. The Matron received a salary of £10 per annum, and a gratuity of £10, likewise, at Christmas. She does not appear to have had any control over the Nurses. They were engaged by the weekly Board, and the minutes show that considerable pains were taken to secure competent women for the post. The beds, pro-

ably, numbered about 30, and were in due course increased to 100, when a further staff of Nurses were engaged. The apothecary seems to have been the most important functionary in the establishment, and appears to have held the position now occupied by the house physicians and house surgeons. He was responsible for the cupping and bleeding of the patients—a practice universally resorted to in those days for all cases of inflammation, and which formed a very important part of the treatment. His responsibility extended also to the Nursing staff, as it appeared no Nurse was permitted to be absent from her ward without his consent. After an instructive sketch of various quaint manners and customs prevalent during the first few decades of the Hospital's existence, Mr. DENT concluded the first part of his lecture by a display of valuable maps and engravings illustrative of the subject.

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"An active woman" writes to the *Western Morning News*:—

"There is one clause full of significance in the report of the South Devon and East Cornwall Hospital presented to an admiring public at the annual meeting held this week in Plymouth. This clause fitly introduces a subject on which it is time some general action was taken, because it argues an abuse of which many institutions outside of South Devon and East Cornwall are guilty. In the treasurer's report occurs this sentence:—'The total expenditure for the year's working was £959 in excess of the income, but the Private Nursing Institute yielding a credit balance of £309, the deficit had been reduced to £649.' So that the wages earned by these private Nurses was just £309 in excess of the wages paid to them. Judging by analogy (of the wages paid to the Nurses in this particular Hospital, I have no special knowledge) the wages paid to them would range from £20 to £25 per year. On twenty or even twenty-five pounds a year it is not possible for a lady (and many of the Nurses everywhere now are ladies by birth and training) to live, food and lodging being found, and yet save enough for out-of-work times, sickness, and age. The work is continuous, and at times very arduous. Women sometimes take up Nursing for their own pleasure simply, but most often for a livelihood. It is neither fair to them, nor just in the abstract, that a large proportion of what they have actually earned should be handed over to eke out the funds of an institution in which they have no more financial interest than any member of the 'general public,' as Mr. Baring Gould's Zita calls it. Would the secretary care to hand over half his salary to help out the funds. A report of a nursing institution in London, which I noticed last week, where the Nurses had banded together to work for themselves, shewed that on a year's working the average return to each Nurse was £96 10s., after deducting working expenses and a percentage to the institution. A comparison may be odious, but it is unavoidable. One point, that is sometimes urged, is that the private nursing is part of the training given; and it is a fact that Probationers, who have been at the institution a year, are liable to be sent out nursing. *Tant pis pour les malades et pour eux.* That is also an evil that needs remedying. Girls come to such an institution to be trained under the eyes of experienced Nurses and Doctors, not to be sent to experiment in private houses, where they are left, except for the doctor's visits, to the resources which themselves know are far too slender for such solitary work. Obviously a certain percentage of a private Nurse's wages must go to the institution to which she is attached for working expenses and the privilege of introduction, but where that percentage is swollen into an undue size, it becomes a case of justice *versus* charity, a divorce which many charitable institutions favour."

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