

vided, that Mrs. Coster conceived the brilliant and unprecedented idea of working for a period of six months as assistant to the medical officer, with a view to rendering herself as efficient as possible. Having successfully carried out this plan, she set energetically to work to re-model the Nursing arrangements and instruct the Nurses, and had the satisfaction of accomplishing a good deal of useful work before her resignation in the year 1862.

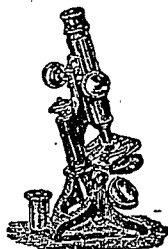
To those who are engaged in the work of Poor Law Infirmaries this incident must prove especially interesting, as it shows how the spirit of reform just commencing in Hospitals was developing likewise in one, at least, of those Infirmaries where, six or seven years later, such a system of corruption and neglect was revealed as to cause horror and indignation almost unparalleled in the popular mind.

After a lapse of some few years of private life, Mrs. Coster resumed her Nursing career in the year 1872 as Matron of St. George's Hospital. It must not be supposed that she found everything in that great Institution exactly in the same condition as it is in now. Scientific Nursing had hardly, even then, become general in Hospitals, and was little known beyond the region of St. Thomas's, where the Nightingale School was daily increasing in importance and efficiency. During Mrs. Coster's tenure of office, the number of Probationers has gradually increased from six to thirty-eight, and other changes have been gradually initiated and placed on a substantial basis. It is especially worthy of remark that St. George's Hospital was one of the first to insist on a three years' standard of training for Nurses. All Probationers are received on equal terms, merit and capacity being the only passport to promotion.

Of her work, Mrs. Coster says but little; she is of a singularly modest and unassuming disposition, and has a great dislike to publicity. Possessed of a generous sympathetic nature, her views are wide and tolerant, and she has a firm belief in the goodness of human nature. These qualities render her deservedly esteemed and beloved by all those with whom she is brought in contact. A staunch supporter of the Royal British Nurses' Association, Mrs. Coster has a seat on the Executive Committee, the Registration Board, and other of its Committees, and can bring to bear on their deliberations the valuable and matured experience of a lifetime of useful work.

Medical Matters.

INFECTIVE PNEUMONIA.



Ever since the Influenza first made its unwelcome appearance in epidemic form, in this country, it has been a matter of common observation that one of the most frequent sequelæ of the complaint is pneumonia. This differs from ordinary inflammation of the lung substance in the important points that the temperature, as a rule, rises gradually, that the illness is ushered in without the customary shivering of an ordinary attack, and that the course of the disease is less acute and convalescence more tardy. It seems to be now fairly certain that these cases of pneumonia after influenza are due to a distinct infective process of the lungs, and not to a mere catarrhal attack as was formerly thought, when the inflammatory condition was ascribed to a chill whilst the patient was weakened by the influenza affection. Recent researches which show that the lungs in fatal cases contain large quantities of the influenza bacillus go far to prove this theory. Its importance upon the treatment and as evidencing the necessity of careful nursing is obvious, and while on the one hand the ordinary crisis on the eighth day need not be expected in such cases, it is even more necessary in them to maintain the strength of the patient by most careful feeding and stimulants.

FISH BONES IN THE THROAT.

An interesting and very practical article was published last month in a German medical paper, showing a new method of preventing the disagreeable consequences which often result from the presence of a fish-bone in the throat. It was found by experiment that small fish-bones placed in vinegar, at the body temperature, became quite soft and partially dissolved. Even more result was obtained with dilute solutions (from one to five per cent.) of hydrochloric acid. It is therefore recommended that for fish-bones in the larynx, or in the œsophagus, applications of hydrochloric acid should be made by means of appropriate brushes; and when the fish bone is impacted too low in the œsophagus to be reached, that small quantities of the acid should be repeatedly swallowed. This, at any rate, is an easy and, possibly, a useful suggestion for Nurses to remember.

SURGEONS' HANDS.

An American contemporary, discussing this subject, arrives at the conclusion with which we are at any rate not yet familiar in England. "One can tell nowadays," it says, "something of the

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