

for the same patient to be attending, at the same time, at a General Hospital, and at a Throat, or a Skin, or an Eye, Hospital, for some allied and special disease. We have, ourselves, known of more than one instance in which a patient was at the same time attending at three Special Hospitals, and of one case where a woman went from one Institution to another until within a year she had been an out-patient in eight separate Institutions, and an in-patient in two others, besides having also various operations performed on her at a dental Institution. If, therefore, the figures to which we have alluded were divided by four, we should, perhaps, obtain an approximate knowledge of the actual number of individuals who attend during the year as Hospital out-patients.

In the first place, therefore, we desire to avoid the exaggeration into which a considerable number of persons have fallen, in discussing this matter, doubtless with no intention to deceive, but merely from ignorance of the practical conditions and actual facts. There remains, however, quite sufficient to justify the belief that many people attend Hospitals and receive the benefits of gratuitous advice and treatment under false pretences. It would have appeared, at first sight, as if no excuse were possible for such conduct, but it is a strange fact that it has come to be believed, by no inconsiderable section of the community, that such proceedings are justifiable. A very brief consideration, however, will be sufficient to expose the system in its true light, and we doubt not that it only requires to be so exposed, to prevent many, who, by lack of thought, rather than any evil purpose, have thus acted, from continuing to do so. Medical men of the greatest skill and eminence give their services gratuitously to Hospitals, and see large numbers of patients, thereat, without fee or reward. They do so for two well understood reasons. First of all, as a matter of charity pure and simple, and in consequence of a system of gratuitous medical relief which has grown up with the growth of this country and of the medical profession. Secondly, because, especially at General Hospitals to which medical schools are attached, out-patients supply a field for clinical study and tuition, which could not otherwise be obtained. Hitherto this has been well recognised, and persons who went to Hospitals expected, in return for the benefits which they received, to be utilised as subjects from which medical students could be taught the signs, symptoms, and progress of disease, while they, at the same time, understood that the treatment they received was of a purely charitable character.

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#### LADY VISITORS FOR WORKHOUSES.

It is reported in the Press that, in consequence of the increasing number of scandals connected with the workhouses and their infirmaries, an effort is about to be made to induce the Local Government Board to appoint, or to sanction the appointment of, women as visitors of the domestic arrangements of these institutions. It is quite evident that the men members of Boards of Guardians are unable to perform the duties of such inspection in any adequate manner, and the benefits which have been found to result when women have undertaken this duty, lead to the belief that it would be wise for such assistance to be universally adopted. There are many things, both in the household and nursing departments, which any ordinary and unprofessional eye would overlook, but which a woman, accustomed to domestic details, would at once perceive, even if she had no definite professional knowledge. We, therefore, earnestly hope that the proposal will be carried into effect, and that, in every district, qualified ladies will either be elected on the Boards of Guardians for the special purpose of supervising such details, or will be delegated to carry out such work. But we would go a step further and urge that the Government should appoint a certain number of Inspectors, whose duty it should be to visit every workhouse in the country, and report upon its condition and management, and that such reports should be presented to Parliament, in due form, as in the case of the official reports of other Government Inspectors. Furthermore, we believe, that, for this duty, those women should be selected, who have, by a thorough Hospital training as Nurses, acquired an accurate appreciation and knowledge of the methods which are necessary to secure efficiency, and of the faults which the neglect of such conditions may cause. There are, in the ranks of those who have, for various reasons, retired from active professional work, many women who would, in every way, be admirably qualified to hold such a position. It is impossible to doubt that such a systematic inspection of, and inquiry into, the methods at present employed, and the consequent flood of light which would be thrown upon the matter, would lead to reforms and improvements which, by common consent, are most urgently needed.

#### THE CHELSEA HOSPITAL FOR WOMEN.

We have, in these columns, commented upon, and on the ground of impartial justice objected to, the fact that members of the consulting staff of the Chelsea Hospital for Women, had been placed upon the Committee of Inquiry, into the charges brought against their Institution. It is, therefore, with great pleasure, that we observe a statement from Lord Cadogan to the Chelsea Vestry to the effect that these gentlemen would not act upon this committee; and, therefore, that the Vestry have now appointed a member of their own body to take part in the investigations. It is generally understood that other facts remain to be advanced concerning these charges than those which have been already made public; and for the good of the hospital and its patients, the sooner the truth is known upon this matter, the better will it be. There is no doubt that a thorough inquiry will take place, and the impartiality of the investigators is now fortunately placed beyond all question.

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