

Englishmen and Englishwomen naturally resent and bitterly condemn.

But there is a wider ground for this interest. The good government of the nursing profession is now realised to be a matter of the greatest importance to the public, who either in hospitals or in private houses may require the services of these women; because this involves their discipline, their technical knowledge, and their efficiency. The control which is exercised over nurses during their educational course in hospitals is dependent to a large extent upon the matrons of the training schools. It is a matter of common knowledge that the tone and success of a school depends to an immense extent upon its Head. Every public school, every college in the country recognises that fact. And it is true to an even greater extent of the nurse training schools; not only because women are more impressionable and more imitative than boys or men, but also because nurses are under more dependent conditions than those which hold in most educational institutions. Hospital matrons, of course, exercise a greater authority over their paid subordinates than the heads of other schools possess over their paying pupils. It is for the interest alike of the hospital, of the nurses, and of the public that such discipline should be maintained. Yet it is obvious now to everyone that the results of the proceedings of the officials of the Royal British Nurses' Association strike at the very root of the matrons' authority and rightful influence. They have broken faith with those matrons who founded the Association, and turned them out of their permanent seats on the General Council. It is widely reported that they are now endeavouring to turn all the *ex officio* matrons—that is to say, the heads of the chief nurse training schools in the country—off the Executive Committee also. Of course such a policy is eminently foolish, because its first effect has been to alienate from the Association the sympathy and the support of the women by whom it was founded and made successful, and without whose help it is simply doomed to fail. But the public see very clearly that the officials are not only ruining an Association designed to protect and advantage the public themselves, but that they are also introducing into the nursing world an element of friction and discord which will be most detrimental to hospitals, to the nursing profession, and ultimately again to the public.

Annotations.

PAUPER NURSES.

THE question of Nursing in Workhouse Hospitals and Infirmaries in Ireland is one to which we have frequently alluded, and which demands immediate consideration and reform, as the evils arising from pauper nursing are too grave to be any longer ignored. The Special Report of the Executive Committee of the Irish Workhouse Association, on Nursing in Workhouse Hospitals and Infirmaries, states that "Pauper Nurses form the blackest blot in the Poor Law Administration." It further says that the pauper nurses are "incompetent, ignorant, and irresponsible," and that "the evils of pauper nursing cannot be satisfactorily removed, by the addition of trained nursing, if pauper nursing be still retained; a trained nurse with pauper assistants will be dragged down towards their level." Amongst the evils complained of, as rampant under the present system, are the levying of blackmail, the systematic ill-treatment of the genuine poor patients, the encouragement and protection of dishonest malingerers, ignorance and neglect of all sanitary precautions, and systematic deception of the nurse and doctor. In short, in comparison with the Irish pauper nurse of to-day, Sairey Gamp and Betsy Prig contrast as angels of light. Must we wait until another Dickens arises to effect by the force of popular opinion the necessary reforms which those responsible for the efficient nursing of the sick in Workhouse Infirmaries seem so slow to undertake? Apparently the question of consideration for the pocket of the ratepayer, which always appeals to a section of the community, is one which need not be considered in this matter. We think better of the average ratepayer than to believe that, even if some additional expense were incurred in order to place Irish Infirmary nursing on an efficient basis, he would wish the sick poor to suffer, rather than put his hand in his pocket to defray a slight increase in the rates. It has, however, been demonstrated both by theory and practice that the system of pauper nursing is nasty but not cheap. Not merely is it "grossly defective," but it is "exceedingly extravagant." The highest authorities are of opinion that money must be saved by the abolition of the system, and that where reform has been fully carried out, saving has actually been accomplished. A leading Irish paper

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