

the Premiums should be paid by Nurses instead of their washing bills, by a charmingly simple arrangement these latter being defrayed by Hospitals, out of monies, be it remembered, subscribed by the charitable public for the care of the sick poor. This idea, like all others connected with this Fund, evidently emanated from some one utterly ignorant of Nurses, because it benefited nobody, except the Fund; the money would pass direct from the Hospital coffers to the banking account of the Fund; the Nurse would have to pay her bills as before; she would gain no increase of salary, and no iota of advantage. Nominally, her name would stand, perhaps, in the books of the Fund as entitled to the benefits derivable from a Premium of £4 a year, which her Hospital was paying for her.

If she were likely to stay in the service of the Hospital till the age of fifty, of course this would be an extremely charming and advantageous arrangement for her. But anyone acquainted with Hospitals could have told the originator of this brilliant idea, that in the whole length and breadth and width of the United Kingdom, there are probably not ten Nurses of fifty years of age who are, and have been at work in the same Institution for twenty-five years. We believe that there are not, all told, two hundred women of that age employed as Hospital Nurses. What, then, would happen in the case of any Nurse who leaves the Institution which has been paying for her a certain settled sum to secure her an Annuity at the age of fifty? We will really struggle to argue gravely about this matter. We will presume that it may be said—in irritable and haughty accents—“No nurse *will* leave her Hospital with such a glorious prospect before her eyes.” Then we timidly suggest these little thoughts: Two years after this delightful scheme is adopted, the very youngest Probationer will have been trained, and be ready for a Staff Nurse's appointment; but if none have departed in this two years, must she, and all her contemporaries, cheerfully grind along for twenty-five long years as “Pros.” at £12 a year? or will they all be made Staff Nurses together, and each receive the enhanced salary? or, in other words, will this simple little scheme cost the Hospital another £800 a year or so? And if not, and Probationers are to continue for a quarter of a century in that juvenile condition, of course there will be no room for new entrants; and so, will this blissful Hospital cease to have a Training School for Nurses at all?

But let us humbly venture to suppose that a Nurse leaves the Hospital in question at the end, say, of five years' work, and becomes a Staff Nurse at an Institution which does not pay for its Nurses to this Fund, or becomes a Private Nurse

on her own account. Can anyone believe for one moment that she will be willing, or even able, to continue to pay one-fifth of her salary, year after year, to the Fund? Of course she will not. What a Hospital pays for its Nurses under such conditions must be absolutely thrown away, so far as it, and its Nursing Staff, is concerned, and quite useless, save to swell the receipts of the Pension Fund. Not one Nurse in fifty, while employed at a Hospital, expects to be dependent at the age of fifty upon ten shillings a week: she expects to rise in her profession, and obtain a settled and superior post; or to be married, and need no further assistance.

We reprint this week correspondence from a leading provincial journal, showing the criticisms of the scheme by shrewd Yorkshire people, evidently as unprejudiced as ourselves in the matter. We have before us, and will take an early opportunity of publishing, the rates at which a leading London Insurance Company is prepared to grant Annuities to women, and especially so to Nurses, as their lives are below the average of their sex in length. These prove up to the hilt our contention as to the unfair expensiveness of the Pension Fund rates, and the statements made by Mr. Fatkin and others on the same question. In all solemnity we now say to the great merchants who have founded this Fund, “In the name of Nurses we thank you for your princely generosity, and most benevolent intentions, upon their behalf. There is a certain percentage of them who urgently need assistance when past work. The funds you have so nobly supplied would make a grand and real Pension Fund for such women, and if not sufficient to meet the whole need, would doubtless be supplemented by others encouraged to follow your great examples. But we cannot imagine how nor why you have been persuaded to sanction a scheme, which anyone acquainted with Nurses and their wants would have told you is entirely unsuitable for their case, and certain eventually to fail. But there are serious matters to which we firmly believe your attention cannot have been drawn. We have frequently said that the Nurses who are so poor and friendless as to need a pension, are just the very women who are most unable, of course, to pay the fair and necessary premiums for an annuity. The scheme, which is being bolstered up with your great names, is asking from them far more than is fair and necessary, as the tables of the Standard, the North British and Mercantile, and other large insurance offices clearly show. You are told, perhaps, that six hundred Nurses have already taken out policies. To that we reply, You were told twelve months ago that fifteen hundred were anxious to join.

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