

for the work, but that the conditions under which the nurses have to carry out their duties in the Workhouse are not such as to attract them." This is exactly what we have pointed out, in these columns, on many previous occasions; but Mr. Rhodes does not, apparently, include in his argument, some of the chief causes which are now actively preventing the best class of nurses from entering upon Infirmary work. He refers with emphasis to the facts of the small pay and insufficient arrangements for night nursing, "to the meddling of incompetent matrons," and to the inefficient food and cooking which is the rule in most Workhouses. To some extent, these facts undoubtedly prevent the best class of probationers from entering the nursing departments of Workhouse Infirmaries; but, beyond all these, a great, and at present, insuperable difficulty must be looked for in the anomalous condition of the present regulations of the department in all Poor Law Institutions. The last Nursing Order of the Local Government Board may induce a larger number of well-qualified nurses to enter upon the duties of Infirmary Matrons. But until the present regulations are altered, and the matron is made, in fact as well as in name, the head of the Nursing Department, and is given the entire control over the female staff, so long will the ever recurring scandals and troubles continue, so long will the best class of Matrons decline to undertake Infirmary work, and so long will the present difficulty of obtaining suitable nurses continue.

Once they are thoroughly trained, nurses undoubtedly deserve to be more liberally paid than they are by most Infirmaries now, and it is certain that, with the advent of better conditions of labour, a more equitable arrangement of their salaries would be found necessary. At present, as we have frequently pointed out, the Regulations of the Local Government Board place the entire nursing staff under the control and management of the Resident Medical Officer; and, as a principle, this has long ago been found unworkable and harmful in other institutions in which a female staff is engaged—the only satisfactory method being that a woman should be placed in control over women.

Of course, it must always be the duty of the nurses to carry out the instructions given by the medical officers for the care of the patients, and in all matters of discipline

the matron must always be subject to the governing body of the Institution. But the principle to which we have alluded has worked so excellently in all public Hospitals that it is extraordinary that it should for so long have been traversed in the case of Workhouse Infirmaries. In any case, there can be no question that it is these anomalous regulations which more than any other cause, have resulted hitherto in the frequent failures and discredit, the difficulties and drawbacks, of Workhouse Nursing.

Annotations.

SISTERS' ROOMS.

MUCH has been said and written of late concerning the change from gruesomeness to fastidious niceity which has come over the environment of medical men in their work, so that "the latter-day consulting room," is nowadays a pleasant place, but so far attention has been little directed to the surroundings of ward sisters, and yet these are perhaps even more noteworthy than those of medical men. The latter, as a rule, set apart one room for professional purposes, and have the rest of the house at their disposal at other times. But the ward sister usually lives, eats, and sleeps in a little room some ten feet square opening directly into her ward. And yet, though the earth-bound shades of Sairey Gamp and Betsy Prig still haunt the scenes of their labours, it would be difficult to imagine anything more unlike the surroundings of these worthies than the rooms inhabited by their successors at the present day.

Once inside a ward sister's room at St. Bartholomew's one might imagine oneself many miles away from the four-and-twenty sick, and, may be, dying people who are on the other side of the door. Sitting in the pleasant window seat, one has a fine view of the venerable old building, surrounding a square where, in the heart of the city, green trees flourish, a fountain is playing, and the cooing of pigeons is a not unfrequent sound, till one fancies oneself gazing at the quad of some college at Oxford or Cambridge. Turning one's attention to the interior of the room, however, this dream is dispelled, for its dainty freshness, as well as sundry other signs, betoken a feminine occupant. No "mere man" ever made such an onslaught upon dust and dirt,

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