

on this board are very well-meaning men we do not doubt, but the British public is now too well educated to give blindly in support of institutions over which it has not the slightest control. And it is moreover an open secret that several hospitals which received largely from the Prince of Wales' Fund are by no means free from criticism. The only means by which the public can express its disapproval is by withdrawing its financial support, and this apparently it intends to do.

NURSING IN SOUTH AFRICA.

THE arrival of Mother Patrick and Mother Jacoba, two Dominican Sisters, in Dublin, is noteworthy for two reasons. Only a short time ago these Sisters were honoured by the bestowal upon them, by the Queen, of the Order of the Royal Red Cross, for their devotion to the sick and dying in South Africa, more especially during the rebellion in 1896. Their personality, therefore, must be of great interest to all nurses. Their visit is significant in the second place, for the reason which occasions it. The authorities in South Africa have decided that all nurses in Government Hospitals must go through a regular course of training, and hold certificates as trained nurses. Mother Patrick and Mother Jacoba, therefore, have been sent to Ireland by their Bishop, in order that they may receive their training in one of the Dublin Hospitals. The wisdom of this step, both on the part of the authorities in South Africa, and on the part of the Sisters, can scarcely be overrated. The devotion of these Sisters to the sick has been beyond all praise, their work is appreciated and valued; but, even so it is recognised in South Africa that devotion can never take the place of knowledge, and although they can show a record of a work which few can excel, and are possessed of the Red Cross, in recognition of their services, they are about to begin at the beginning, and gain the certificates which in South Africa are indispensable.

Those Sisters who seriously take up nursing as a profession, no doubt prove themselves frequently in many ways highly qualified for it. It is because Sisters, or their superior officers, seem at present, too often to think, that they can take up nursing because they *are* Sisters, and that this fact dispenses them from the necessity for the prolonged training necessary to the mere lay woman, that nursing by sisterhoods is

sometimes disparaged. When Sisters undertake nursing, not because it is convenient, and because Sisters are wanted, and they must go because they are sent, but because, firstly, they have the vocation to nurse, and, secondly, because they are qualified by a thorough training, then their work will be valued as it should be; but, to make nuns Ward Sisters, and it is generally Ward Sister's posts which they are selected to fill, at the end of a few months, or even a year's training, and to place them over the heads of well trained nurses, can never be either a satisfactory or a just arrangement.

ALCOHOLIC INSANITY.

At a meeting of the members of the Society for the Study of Inebriety, lately held at the offices of the British Medical Association, a remarkable address upon acquired insanity in its relation to intemperance in alcohol, was given by Lieutenant-Colonel-Surgeon Pringle, who said that the question of insanity following excessive use of alcohol formed one of the most important to the nation at the present day, and it was the duty of the medical profession to train the public mind, so as to prevent people from lapsing into permanent insanity through drink.

We are inclined to agree with Lieutenant-Colonel-Surgeon Pringle that the excessive use of adulterated alcohol is responsible for many symptoms of insanity, which he asserts is terribly on the increase, and has fallen on London like an epidemic, and which he says cannot be due to any appreciable extent to cases becoming publicly treated, which a few years ago were treated privately. Lieutenant-Colonel-Surgeon Pringle condemned the inertia of the Civil Powers of the country in allowing persons to continue in the intemperate indulgence of alcohol to such an extent as to become a burden to the State; he blamed the modern mode of life, which was one of such excitement and anxiety that intoxicants were indulged in to drown care and induce oblivion, and considered that something would have to be done to check the tide of insanity which was surrounding London, by means of compulsory treatment. That such treatment must be on enlightened and humane lines is essential if the public is to consent to compulsion, and Lady Henry Somerset, in organising her Industrial Home at Duxhurst, has set the State an example which it cannot do better than follow.

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