

of nursing reformers, therefore, is that a more uniform standard of education may speedily be established which would sweep away such anomalies, and enable all nurses to obtain adequate teaching in the technical subjects of their curriculum, as well as in the practical execution of their duties in the wards. In the large Metropolitan and provincial schools, it is, of course, easy to organise such courses of instruction, although, even then, there must be much difficulty in attaining to any degree of uniformity. The natural remedy would, therefore, seem to be the adoption of some such plan as that which has so frequently been advocated in these columns—the institution of a central school in each town at which lectures could be given to the nurses of all its various institutions. This plan would be practicable even in London. It would obviate all the difficulties which now exist in small provincial towns; because, at present, while the nurses, say at the County Hospital, have lectures on technical matters from the medical staff of the institution, those who are working at smaller hospitals are unable to obtain similar advantages. The hope, therefore, is by no means chimerical, that the day may come when every town in which there are important Hospitals will possess a technical school for Nursing. The institution of such schools moreover would undoubtedly be followed by a double benefit. On the one hand, they would be opened to the nurses working in the various hospitals of the district; and they would almost certainly be frequented by ladies desirous of entering the nursing profession. The latter would, with the utmost advantage occupy their time, while waiting their turn to enter these institutions, by acquiring a knowledge of the technical subjects of their education which would not only be of immediate advantage to them on entering the hospital, but would leave their time more free for the performance of their practical work.

As we have previously pointed out, this is precisely the system pursued in the education of medical students, who are required to study their technical subjects and pass an examination in these, before they enter upon their duties in the hospital wards. The Dublin technical school for nurses, therefore, we regard as the precursor of many similar institutions in this country, and we earnestly congratulate its authorities upon the excellent results which they have already achieved.

Annotations.

A CORONER'S OPINION.

Two very important points were raised at an inquest recently held by Dr. Lovell Drage, the Coroner for West Hertfordshire, concerning the death of a vagrant at the St. Albans' Workhouse Infirmary. The first more particularly concerns Boards of Guardians, and the second the medical profession. The deceased was found in a comatose condition, and conveyed by the police to the Workhouse Infirmary. The Coroner, in addressing the jury, stated that the ordinary course with regard to patients admitted in this way was that they should see the doctor on his next visit, unless the nurse considered the case sufficiently urgent to require the immediate attention of the doctor. In this case, neither the nurse nor the master considered the case as urgent, and medical aid was not requisitioned for about six hours, and when the doctor arrived death had already taken place. At the inquest it transpired that the deceased was in a most precarious condition, and that though his life could not have been saved, a doctor should at once have seen him. The Coroner was of opinion that no blame could possibly be attached to the nurse for failing to recognise the gravity of the symptoms in a case where the most experienced of doctors would be liable to an error of judgment. There is, however, room for criticism of the system which leaves the responsibility of deciding whether or not medical aid shall be summoned in the hands of the nurse. A nurse is not educated to diagnose, but to carry out medical directions, and we hope the St. Albans' Guardians will recognise the necessity for arranging that all new admissions to their Workhouse Infirmary shall be immediately notified to, and seen by, a qualified medical practitioner.

The next point, which occasioned some severe remarks on the part of the Coroner, was that Dr. Wells, who was commissioned to make a post-mortem examination, omitted entirely, in performing this duty, to examine the brain. The Coroner, in his instructions, made a special note that the principal organs of the body should be carefully examined. At the inquest Dr. Wells stated that these instructions had been conformed with, but on perusing the notes of the examination Dr. Drage found that no examination of the brain had been made, and adjourned the inquest for this to be done. Dr. Wells, it may be

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