

THE shocking exposure of the systematic cruelty of a mental attendant at the Hoxton House Asylum, in thrashing the poor defenceless patients, and for which conduct she escaped with a mere fine of 40s., has aroused many comments, protests, and suggestions, in the press.

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THE suggestion of most value is that in which the appointment of women as lunacy commissioners is advocated. A mental nurse of many years standing, writes in the *Daily Chronicle* :—

"I cannot argue too strongly for the great need of feminine inspection among female lunatics.

"However conscientious the present male commissioners may be, it is in my opinion nearly impossible for any man to inspect among females (particularly lunatics) with the same insight and penetration that a woman could. The small cruelties persistently practised by the present style of nurse in public and private asylums are difficult to detect, unless one has come much into personal contact with them, and are, as far as my experience goes, seldom, or never, found out by the commissioners.

"A woman commissioner of experience and education would be better fitted both to hear and to understand the true state of things, and until women are appointed on all commissions where women are concerned only partial justice can be done."

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"A WOMAN" in the same paper writes :—

"It is obvious that until we have women as Commissioners in Lunacy and inspectors of asylums, it is impossible to stop cruelty in the women's wards. How could these poor creatures who were caged at Hoxton House Asylum tell of their degradation to male officials? And the same remark applies to hospitals and prisons—to all institutions in which women are confined. The Prince of Wales' Hospital Fund states they have been inspecting hospitals—yes, by men; but the public know that it is on the nursing and domestic side that most inspection is needed. And there are no women on the Prison Commission or as inspectors of prisons—so how are we to know what cruelty goes on there? It ought to be a rule that wherever women are kept in institutions, there should be inspection by women."

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A MEMBER of the last Government considers :

"The inspection of private asylums is miserably inadequate. The Lunacy Commissioners are far too few for the enormous and exhausting duty of inspecting with which they are charged. And the very existence of the Commission is an evil, because it lulls the relations of the insane and the general public into the delusion that nothing very bad can go on without being detected. The only remedy for the existing evil is to abolish private asylums (of course with proper compensation to the owners): to place well-to-do lunatics as paying patients in public asylums; and to put all asylums, metropolitan and provincial, under the inspection of the local representative authorities."

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MR. STEWART BROADWOOD, of 3, Queen's Gate Gardens, and Ferney, Malvern Wells, has be-

queathed to Miss Amelia Wall Edwards who nursed him through two serious illnesses £26,444 with his house "Ferney" and the contents, his horses and carriages, and live and dead stock at Wood Farm and Warren Farm, and all his private papers and correspondence. We congratulate this lady on her good fortune. At the same time we think that relations will hesitate before sending for trained nurses, if the result is that large sums of money are left away from children and near relations and bequeathed to nurses. A small legacy as a mark of gratitude is a different matter.

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THE body of Miss Florence Bell, a nurse attached to the Blenheim House Nursing Institution, Kew-road, Richmond, who mysteriously disappeared some two weeks before Christmas, was discovered on Saturday morning floating in the Thames at Hammersmith. Miss Bell up to the day of her disappearance had been nursing a private patient in Blantyre-gardens, Kew. Her engagement terminated on December 12, but at the instance of the patient she agreed to stay on in the capacity of companion. On the afternoon of Monday the 12th Miss Bell left her patient's house after having obtained leave to stay away until seven o'clock in the evening, which was later than her usual hour for returning. At half past eight on that evening she was seen to alight from a Kensington train at Kew Gardens station, but from that time all trace of her was lost. About a week later Miss Bell's cloak was found on the river bank near Putney by a water-side labourer. Inquiries that had meanwhile been set afoot brought to light the fact that Miss Bell had on the day of her death been up to London, where she had had a conversation with a friend, Sister Pauline, at the All Saints' Nursing Sisters Home, Mortimer-street, relative to her admission to that institution. She was, however, informed that she would have to wait until after Christmas before she could be admitted. This seems keenly to have disappointed her, and coupled with her known tendency towards religious depression, may account for what is doubtless her suicide. One fact in connection with her disappearance is the burning of all her letters, which she is known to have destroyed on the morning of the day on which she left home. When found Miss Bell's body was fully dressed, only her cloak and bonnet being missing. Her identity was established by the name which was plainly marked upon the cuffs she was wearing at the time of her death.

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It is a distressing fact that during the past year several cases of suicide amongst nurses have occurred. It would seem as if this impulse to

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