

The addition of 1,000 yearly subscriptions of 5s. each would enable the Committee to hope that, in the course of a few years, a sufficiency of nurses would be planted within easy reach of every member of the great army of Civil servants, soldiers, merchants, planters, railway officials and employees, and other miscellaneous residents who, within the deadly grasp of plague, cholera, sun-stroke, and fever, are working our great Indian Empire.

WE are glad to learn from Mrs. Finlay, the energetic Guardian of the Hampstead poor, that upon the suggestion of the Chairman of the Nursing Committee, the re-arrangement has been sanctioned by the Board of Guardians in the Male Observation ward, and that the Poor Law Board having given permission for an increase of staff, two male nurses will, for the future, take alternate day and night duty in this ward, instead of one attendant being on duty during the day, and sleeping in a room adjoining the ward, and being liable to be called up if required during the night. This new arrangement is in the best interests of the poor patients and of the male nurses.

THE fact that a resolution recently adopted by the Camberwell Guardians that an extension of the Infirmary be made at the cost of £250,000 has been rescinded, will be received with incredulity by those persons who know what a crying need there is for structural reform, or, rather, for complete demolition of the existing building.

AT the last meeting of the Camberwell Guardians a report was read from Dr. Hervey, assistant Local Government Board inspector, in which he said that the Board's inspectors had repeatedly called attention to the inadequacy of the accommodation for the sick poor of the district. Upon the occasion of his visit, on the 8th ult., there were 361 patients, thirty in excess of the certified numbers. During the past winter the infirmary was continually over-crowded to a large extent. There were 300 cases in Constance Road Workhouse which ought to be receiving skilled treatment at a proper infirmary. In addition there were about 100 children occupying adults' beds, many of them needing special treatment in small separate wards. Several of the smaller children had to sleep in baskets. Throughout the infirmary he saw no place in which the milk, ice, cooling drinks, etc., could be stored; they were mostly standing on the window-sills in the corridors, exposed to every particle of floating matter; the milk in several instances had a black surface. The laundry was

deplorably inadequate. The mortuary was the worst of its kind in the metropolis. An offensive odour was perceptible several yards away, and on entering the building he found a corpse quite black from decomposition. There were no signs of disinfectants either on the body or about the room. There were many other irregularities. The matter was referred to a special committee, and it is to be hoped they will lose no time in dealing with it.

IN the meantime, the resignations of eight nurses have been received by the Board. In the discussion, Mr. Hurst, vice-chairman, said he believed the reason for the discontent which prevailed was that frivolous reports were made against the young women. For instance, one of them had been reported because a 'bus conductor raised his hat to her. Another member was of opinion that the girls' sweethearts were at the bottom of the trouble. Another pointed out that the nurses' quarters swarmed with rats. We are inclined to exonerate the sweethearts and to blame the rats. All of this disorganization is an additional inducement to the Guardians to rebuild, and that quickly, a suitable infirmary for the sick of the parish, and a ratless home for the staff. This question of infirmary reform has been debated by the Camberwell Guardians far too long.

THE fact that an attempt has been made by certain members of the Chelsea Board of Guardians to hush up the dispute between Dr. Horn and Miss de Pledge, in relation to the case of the man Morgan, to which we referred last week, does not commend itself to the *Lancet*, which says: "The Board of Guardians have had the matter before them, when five voted in favour of a motion that the facts should be laid before the Local Government Board, and twelve negatived the proposal. This is a decision which will not inspire anyone with much respect for the Board of Guardians unless they supplement their refusal to seek the aid of the Local Government Board by vigorous treatment of the situation themselves. If the Matron interfered with the orders given by the medical man with regard to the surgical care and nursing of a patient, she is so much to blame that it is no exaggeration to say that she is unfit for her position. If she did not behave in the unwarrantable manner which is alleged against her in at least one local paper, her character should be cleared from these aspersions. The debate upon the matter by the Guardians, in the account which has come before us, shows that they have been unable to regard the circumstances in a calm and unprejudiced manner."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)