

Nurses for the Plague.

WE are informed, by the India Office, that thirty nurses have been requisitioned, by cable, by the Indian Government, and that they will be despatched with all speed, although berths are somewhat difficult to obtain just now, as all the steam-ships proceeding to India at this time of year are very full. By the time this issue of the *NURSING RECORD* is in the hands of our readers, it is hoped that a sufficient number of nurses will have offered their services, and have satisfied the medical authorities of the India Office that they are suited for work in a tropical climate. It is, however, possible that more nurses may be required in the future, so that we should advise those who desire to proceed to India as plague nurses to collect their credentials and make application at the India Office. We hope, next week, to publish further particulars, with the names of the nurses selected for this honourable duty.

Nursing Dispute at the Chelsea Infirmary.

A *CONTEMPORARY* which is the organ of the Workhouse Nursing Association, the Midwives' Institute, and the Society of Trained Masseuses, and which purports to be "a practical journal for nurses," makes the following comment on the Chelsea Scandal:—"The whole affair was misrepresented, and very inaccurate reports found their way into the press. Under the present anomalous system, which places wholly disproportionate authority in the hands of young and inexperienced men, who are permitted to perform major operations such as never would be allowed in voluntary hospitals, difficulties will, and must, arise." Well, we suppose that Miss de Pledge's letters to the *Guardians*, which were reported verbatim, were not inaccurate, and anything more damaging to her cause than those letters, it would be difficult to find. Our contemporary, however, has incurred a very serious responsibility in supporting the action of a Matron who has publicly criticised the professional work of a superior officer, and, with equal publicity, expressed an opinion as to his "inexperience." The organ of the Midwives' Institute is, perhaps, consistent in attempting to palliate such proceedings, but it will be the opinion of all well-trained nurses, and one which we have no hesitation in voicing, that nothing could be more injurious to the nursing profession than disloyalty on the part of nurses to those medical men with whom they work.

The Care of the Dead.

THE question of the reverent care of the dead is one which must always appeal to every true nurse, and it is one which may, therefore, be appropriately dealt with in these columns. There are many members of the nursing profession who consider that the duty of the preparation of the body for the grave is a privilege not lightly to be deputed to other hands, and it is largely owing to the example and precept of educated and refined women, that seemliness and reverence in connection with the performance of these duties are now commonly practised in our hospitals, and that in private houses the task is no longer relegated to any casual stranger who, for the consideration of 5s. in cash, and a glass of grog, may be willing to undertake it. Surely, our dead may at least expect that when all that is left to us of them lies mute and helpless in our care, the last services it is possible to render them shall be performed by tender and loving hands, or, at least, by those by whom we may be assured nothing would be done to hurt their sensibilities were they living.

Although much has been done to educate public opinion in this respect, more still remains to be accomplished. The allegations by the South Uist Council as to the "disgusting, brutal, and inhuman conduct" of a medical officer, in connection with the interment of a pauper woman, have recently horrified the public, and only last week the fact that in a public mortuary in London a body was left, fully dressed, and unwashed, for four days, points to the need of re-organization of the arrangements of our public mortuaries.

At an inquest held at the St. Luke's Coroner's Court, last week, the son-in-law of the deceased man complained that though the death occurred on the previous Friday, the body was allowed to remain on a slab in the mortuary, fully dressed, until Tuesday, and that then it was so objectionable it was "not fit for a dog to go near it." Dr. Wynn Westcott said that the duty of cleansing and laying out a dead body lay with the relatives, or the undertaker they engaged. No responsibility rested with the mortuary keeper in that direction. We cannot think the arrangement a satisfactory one. In the event of no relatives being forthcoming, or the relatives not discharging their duty surely in the interests of decency, as well as of the public health, someone should be made responsible for the proper care of the bodies. We would suggest that the services of a respectable woman should be requisitioned in connection with every public mortuary.

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