

Dinner of the Medico-Psychological Association, spoke of Lunacy Legislation as a subject with regard to which the Government of the day is "peculiarly amenable to pressure." The method by which this pressure is to be applied is by influencing local members of Parliament, and this fact may well be noted by trained nurses. A large proportion of Asylum Attendants being men, have votes: to obtain these is important to Parliamentary candidates, and their views are therefore listened to with consideration and attention, and if expedient with something more. Women nurses on the contrary have no votes; consequently their views are of little or no importance, and the consideration of their affairs, though they may urgently demand attention, may safely be postponed to a more convenient season, while matters urged upon members of Parliament by their constituents take precedence. The moral therefore is, that every trained nurse who desires legislation on behalf of her profession should work to obtain the franchise for women, as a means to this end, irrespective of the question of justice to women in the abstract. Until nurses can bring some effective pressure to bear upon members of Parliament we do not think that much advance will be made in obtaining nursing legislation in this country. Legislation is rarely effected merely as a matter of right. Popular opinion, and political expediency are both potent factors in securing it; and political expediency is to a great extent brought about by pressure upon members of Parliament by their constituents. Nurses will therefore do well to remember this, and to take to heart the lesson learnt from the line adopted by the Asylum Workers' Association. This Association is comparatively young, but it will inevitably be forceful in voicing the views of Asylum Workers if it pursues the lines it suggests. Our advice to nurses, of whatever politics—and in our opinion women will do well to abstain from party politics until they obtain their enfranchisement—is to work unceasingly to obtain the suffrage for women. This obtained they will be able to secure for their profession in regard to legislation that attention which it deserves, and they will find that the result will be better education, better pay, shorter hours, greater efficiency. So long as women are cyphers in the State, just so long will their interests be safely ignored. The immediate duty before us therefore, if we desire professional progress, is to obtain the franchise. "The Vote covers all."

## Annotations.

### A CORONER'S STRICTURES.

WE are glad to notice that Mr. Langham, the Southwark coroner spoke strongly on the indefensible practice which obtains in connection with some public institutions of sending out unqualified medical students to attend maternity cases. A case was last week brought before Mr. Langham in which the body of an infant which died at birth remained unburied at the undertaker's for 21 days, because the mother could not procure a certificate of death and the cemetery authorities would not permit the interment without it. It transpired at the inquest that the mother had been attended at her confinement by Mr. Foster, an extern probationer studying at Guy's Hospital, who, not being a qualified practitioner, was unable to give a certificate of death. On enquiring for Mr. Foster the coroner was informed that he had gone for his holidays, a curious coincidence, as last year when a Guy's student was wanted at an inquest he also had "gone for his holidays that afternoon." The coroner in summing up said that "the case was the most disgraceful he had ever heard of. Apart from the delay in burial, students could not give certificates, and therefore the expenses of an inquest were incurred. He could not express himself strongly enough on the practice of some hospitals sending out unqualified men to attend maternity cases." We are glad that a coroner has given utterance to this opinion on a most reprehensible practice. The body being too decomposed to admit of a diagnosis being made by a medical man, the jury returned a verdict that it was impossible to say by what means death had occurred.

### AN OBJECTIONABLE INNOVATION.

WE observe that at the recent quarterly court of governors of the Middlesex Hospital, that Col. the Hon. Herbert Egerton, in seconding the adoption of the report, stated "that there had been a very large call made upon their beds during the past quarter in consequence of so many hospitals being closed, and it was gratifying to know that they had been able to accommodate all the serious cases transferred to them from other hospitals."

Last year, as we have reported, the Middlesex Hospital peremptorily closed its doors for *eight weeks* to the sick poor of the neighbour-

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