

mittedly the weak point in the nursing of hospitals under the Board—namely, the qualifications of the first assistant nurses. At present these nurses must either have served for two years in one of the Board's Hospitals, or they must have had a year's training in a general hospital. The tendency, therefore, is for the probationers who have been dismissed from general hospitals as unsuitable—either because their work does not come up to the standard required, or because their health is found unequal to the strain of the life—to drift into fever hospitals as first assistant nurses, an arrangement which cannot be regarded as satisfactory. We would suggest that nurses desiring posts as Charge Nurses under the Metropolitan Asylums Board should be required to work for six months as first assistant nurses. They might then move on to other hospitals, when they would be well qualified to act as Charge Nurses. Another point which appears to deserve the attention of the Asylums Board is that, in some institutions, at least, it is an open secret that the Assistant Nurses and the Ward Maids are not allowed to be out on the same evening. The inference is that these officials are required to undertake one another's duties, and, indeed, there is no doubt that such an interchange of duties does take place. Is it surprising, therefore, that when a ward maid has been allowed, and, indeed, required, to perform nursing duties while in a hospital, that on leaving it she considers herself entitled to don a uniform, and blossom out into a fully fledged private nurse? From our own personal knowledge we are aware that ward maids do from time to time pose as trained nurses. They should not be allowed to obtain any ground for advancing this claim, but it is evident that a woman who has been required to perform nursing duties has, in the present disorganized condition of nursing, some pretext for doing so. So far, no definite standard of general nursing education has been established. Every hospital fixes its own, consequently individuals claim to do the same. The Metropolitan Asylums Board has, within the last few years, done so much to improve the nursing in the hospitals under its control that we hope it will also rectify the defects to which we have alluded. Experience in fever nursing is increasingly sought, at the present time, by fully trained nurses, and that obtained in the hospitals of the Asylums Board has a recognised value, so there should be no difficulty in obtaining the nurses required.

Annotations.

THE PRINCE'S FUND.

THE Annual Meeting of the Prince of Wales' Hospital Fund for London was held last week at Marlborough House. The Prince of Wales presided. The draft report for 1899 showed that the receipts for the year were £48,536 15s. 4d., against £39,272 3s. 5d. The total sum distributed amounted to £42,000, of which £26,250 was given as annual grants, and the remainder as donations. The cost of management and collection was about 3½ per cent., as compared with 6½ per cent. for 1898. The result of the year's work is that, in addition to improvements in operating theatres, nurses' accommodation, sanitary and other requirements, forty-five more disused beds will be opened and maintained, making a total of 287 re-opened in the last three years by the help of the Fund. Further, in the course of the present Session a Petition will be presented to Parliament calling the attention of Parliament to the heavy rating of hospitals. The adoption of the Report, which was carried unanimously, was moved by the President, and seconded by the Bishop of London.

While we sympathise with any movement which has for its object the assistance of our General Hospitals, we greatly regret that the Report of the Prince of Wales' Hospital Fund has once more been adopted without any suggestion being made as to the representation of women upon the Council of the Fund. It is most incongruous that in a national institution, founded in memory of Her Majesty the Queen, her own sex should be excluded from any voice in its counsels. Moreover, so long as the efficient management of our hospitals depends so largely upon the wise administration of the domestic department, so long as Training Schools for women nurses are maintained, and the ailments of women are treated in these institutions, just so long is the sex disqualification of women from representation a deplorable blunder. Until this fundamental mistake is rectified we can only advise women to give their money to institutions concerning which they can satisfy themselves from personal knowledge that it is well spent. We have, as we have said, all sympathy with the objects of the Fund, but, we are of opinion that until women are accorded due representation, the Fund will never be deservedly popular.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)