

## Professional Reviews.

### "THE NURSING DIRECTORY."

(Continued from page 303.)

#### SCOTTISH HOSPITALS.

In Scotland, Chalmer's Hospital, Edinburgh, Leith Hospital, and the Ayr County Hospital have adopted the three years' standard.

#### IRISH HOSPITALS.

In Ireland there seems still to be considerable divergence in the standard adopted, as it varies from six months to four years.

#### NOTICEABLE POINTS.

The "Nursing Directory" should always be at hand for reference by medical practitioners and qualified nurses. The latter should see that their own names are inserted in it, for admission to this Directory means that the applicant has attained a definite standard of professional training, as the Matrons' Council only accepts as eligible nurses holding a three years' certificate from a training school maintaining not less than 100 beds. We note, however, that while the "Directory" bears evidence of careful revision, in many instances nurses have omitted to return the slips sent out to them, and, therefore, their entries are unverified. This is a great pity, as the accuracy, and consequently the usefulness of a Directory is thereby neutralized. Entire efficiency can only be maintained by the hearty co-operation of all concerned.

The "Directory" is published by Messrs. John Bale, Sons, and Danielsson, Limited, of 88-89, Great Titchfield Street, London, W., a firm noted for the carefulness and accuracy of their work, so that we are not surprised to find it free from clerical errors. It may be obtained from the offices of the NURSING RECORD, 11, Adam Street, Strand, price 5s.

### "THE DISENCHANTMENT OF NURSE DOROTHY."

"The Disenchantment of Nurse Dorothy; a story of Hospital Life," by Florence Baxendale, published by Messrs. Skeffington and Son, Piccadilly, W., is welcome, inasmuch as it is evidently written by one acquainted with her subject, and who possesses, moreover, considerable literary ability.

There is over-much love-making in the book for our taste; perhaps the author considered that this was rendered necessary by the literary tastes of the novel-reading public. All the same it is a pity, and scarcely presents a correct picture of hospital life, for the hospital nurse by no means invariably, or even commonly, meets her "fate" among the hospital staff and her private patients; nevertheless the book is distinctly readable, and the heroine "Nurse Dorothy" a good specimen of her class, though how such a girl could consent to an engagement, and a secret one moreover, with a man of the type with which Miss Beatrice Harraden has made us familiar in the character of Theodore Bevan, in her notable book, "The Fowler," is hard of comprehension. The author herself seems to feel the difficulty, for she gives us to understand that the influence exercised by the detestable house surgeon "Mr. Hurst" over Nurse Dorothy is mainly mesmeric in nature. One is wholly glad when she frees herself from this entanglement.

Does it ever occur to nurses to wonder why hospital

matrons are held in such universal detestation? The fact is patent enough, and nurses who crave for popularity may well pause before they aspire to the higher posts of their profession. We constantly find in nursing novels, whether written by lay or professional persons, that the matron is the villain of the piece, and the present book is no exception to this rule. It is true that the matron of St. Helens is an altogether different type of woman from her colleague at St. Bernard's, but she is scarcely convincing. We fancy indeed she must have been a better woman than a matron. For instance we read:—

"The matron, by the bye, liked to be called by her name, and not addressed as 'matron.' She laughingly said it was too suggestive of the workhouse, and the inmates' mis-pronunciation of the word, which on their lips generally became 'matrum.' I think in her heart she thought it was quite unnecessary for her to be addressed by an official title, to her it savoured of vanity. It was different in work-houses."

The sentiment may be admirable, but it is scarcely consistent with good discipline, which is after all an essential factor in a nurse's training.

But the central figure is Miss Isabel Herbert, Matron of St. Bernard's, "whose smile suggests a bite," a tendency with which the patients seem to have been well acquainted.

"The probationer returned to her work in the ward looking 'flustered.' . . . 'Been in to Matron and got it hot, poor dear,' a woman conjectured sympathetically. . . . The 'torture chamber' was the familiar name of the office amongst the nurses. Very often Bobbie (Nurse Robina Græme) had been in the wrong; she had been careless and deserved her scolding; but sometimes circumstances had combined to put the Matron in a bad temper; a doctor had slighted her, or she imagined he had; or some member of the Committee had not agreed with her. She felt her valuable services were not appreciated (she was quite convinced no other person could manage as well as herself; had she not completely re-organised the hospital?) Of course the Matron's temper must have a safety valve; if kept under when prudent, it was sure to escape later on with greater force for having been temporarily suppressed. The Sisters, at least some of the Sisters, kept her well supplied with ward tittle-tattle, and nurses, tired, worn-out creatures were very convenient people upon whom to vent her spleen. Most of the girls had something or other said about them to their discredit from time to time; it was not at all an uncommon event for a nurse to be sent to the matron's office, a nurse who was working well and conscientiously, and after some trifling of the Matron's, some moments of suspense on the nurse's side, to be confronted by a fault, or supposed fault, for in no place is it more easy to manufacture faults than in a hospital. A nurse who has just been "had over the coals" unjustly goes back to her work swelling with indignation, all spirit taken out of her. The matron sits smiling a cat-like smile, pleased she has done the devil's work. The angels weep!"

How do Matrons like the picture? Yet that it is a type is undeniable. Will no one arise who will draw for us the ideal matron? A matron with her heart in her work, the honour of her profession her first consideration, unselfish, self-sacrificing, just, and considerate of the welfare of her nurses, but inflexible when principle demands it of her? She undoubtedly exists, and is worthy to be put on record.

There are other quotations we should like to make. Some of the remarks on "the god of smartness," for instance, are very smart, but space fails us. No doubt many nurses will read the book for themselves.

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