

Annotations.

THE RELATIVE COST OF DOCTORS AND NURSES.

THE cost of medical education has been recently commented on somewhat widely in the Press, owing to an article which has appeared on this subject in the *British Medical Journal*. The total sum expended by a medical student in qualifying himself for his profession is at a low estimate from £650 to £700, while if he graduates from a University the cost is still greater. The cost of nursing education is now becoming serious, and the question is arising as to whether it is justifiable for institutions to bear the whole of it. Little more than thirty years ago, nursing education did not exist. The women who then worked in the wards of hospitals, and many of whom, by reason of their opportunities, became excellent practical nurses, were paid and rightly paid for their work; for of systematic instruction, qualifying them to take their places as members of a scientific profession, there was none. Moreover they not only performed all the nursing, but did the whole of the ward work including the scrubbing of the floor, and even in some instances carrying up the supplies of coal.

As to provision for their personal comforts, if they "lived in," the arrangements were of the simplest description. They shared their bedroom with two or three of their comrades, and this they were expected to dust and leave in order, and to make their beds, before going on duty in the morning. At meal times they waited on themselves, and comfortably appointed nursing homes, with maids to wait on them, were unknown. Now, almost every hospital provides its nurses with comfortable and well appointed separate rooms. Further, in the wards, scrubbers and ward maids relieve them of all duties which may not reasonably be considered as part of their nursing education, for, be it remembered, the average probationer by no means comes into the hospital with an expert, and therefore valuable, knowledge of such things as bed-making and dusting; all these have to be taught her. Also, her hours on duty are now those of the professional woman rather than of the domestic drudge, and, besides systematic practical teaching in the wards by skilled Sisters and nurses, she receives regular theoretical instruction from the Matron and Medical Staff. The question

inevitably arises—is she to be paid for receiving all this valuable instruction, qualifying her after graduation to obtain for her skilled services the fees of a professional worker? It would seem both more reasonable and more just that she should at least pay the out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the institution during the years of her pupillage.

AN IMPECUNIOUS HOSPITAL.

The authorities of the Royal London Ophthalmic Hospital, in the City Road, are in a sad plight financially, and have been summoned before the Magistrates by the Overseers of the Poor for failure to pay the rates due by them, amounting to over £300. Their plea was that they had not got the money. The Court had no option but to endeavour to extract blood from a stone, and to order the payment of the sum within the next fortnight. The position of the hospital has been well advertised by the account of the proceedings before the magistrates by most of the leading daily papers, and no doubt money will find its way into the coffers of this impoverished institution—let us hope to the extent needed.

THE MEDICAL SCHOOLS.

With the beginning of October comes the re-opening of the Medical Schools, and an influx of new students into the hospitals. Of special interest this autumn is the re-opening of the London School of Medicine for Women, which is now in possession of entirely new buildings in Hunter Street, in which are provided every facility for the work in hand. Miss Aldrich-Blake, M.S., M.D., gave the introductory address and welcomed the new students, and to old and new alike gave excellent advice. For all those who aspire to treat sick human beings there must, she said, be a deep sympathetic study of human nature. The primary object of the doctor was to heal, and they must never, by touch or speech, give avoidable pain. It is noteworthy that Professor Allbut, in speaking on "Specialism" at Middlesex Hospital said that specialists must not be in separate castes, but scouts in touch with the main body. This is exactly the point which we have always supported in connection with nursing organization. The mischievous attempt to recognize specialists as qualified nurses, by placing untrained asylum attendants on the Register of the Royal British Nurses' Association, largely emanated, and received its chief support, from the Middlesex Hospital.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)