

If this very dirty habit is in practice in the wards of the National Hospital, it merely points to the fact that the nursing system is bad, and must be brought up to date. But making the medical officer responsible for the cleanliness and other nursing details in the wards, such as the clothing of the patients, will not effect this very desirable reform. An efficiently trained Lady Superintendent can alone organize and keep up to the mark, a high state of efficiency amongst the Sisters and nurses, and to relieve the Lady Superintendent of this responsibility and place it in the hands of the medical staff, would produce very undesirable friction and resulting disorganization in the management of the hospital.

What the medical staff have a right to demand is that the Governors shall satisfy them that the nursing system is good, and that the nursing officers are thoroughly trained and efficient. Now, in our opinion, this efficient nursing system has never been attained at the National Hospital, owing to restrictions placed upon the authority of the Lady Superintendent by the Secretary Superintendent, who acts as intermediary between her and the Committee, and also to the fact that probationers and not trained nurses are admitted to the staff of this Special Hospital, *where a general nursing education cannot be acquired.* We are well aware that the nursing department of the National Hospital requires modernising, but it can only be done by the co-operation of the lay, medical and nursing departments, with any hope of instituting good discipline and satisfactory results. Medical men are *not* trained nurses, and the most liberal minded members of the medical profession would find themselves in an impossible position if asked to take a Staff Nurse's duties for a day. Frankly, we should not like to be one of the patients.

The National Hospital cannot afford to become a house divided against itself. The line of treatment for which it exists is so highly specialised, the diseases it admits so sad and lingering, and the special branch of brain mischief which it attempts to relieve, are in many instances so distressing, that it requires the most absolute harmony and co-operation amongst the whole hospital staff, if the patients are to receive the best treatment and nursing care. We hope, therefore, there will be no attempt, upon the part of either of the branches of administration, to grasp absolute power, and thus submerge the other. No good can come from either a lay or medical Dictatorship in any hospital. Complete harmony must exist between them, or the institution cannot prosper.

Reflections

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.



The table on which the Queen signed her assent to the Australian Commonwealth Bill is one of the finest pieces of furniture from Windsor Castle, and now bears the following inscription:—"This table was used by Her Majesty Queen Victoria on the occasion of the signing of the commission empowering the Lords Commissioners to declare the Royal Assent to the Bill creating the Commonwealth of Australia, 9th July, 1900." The inkstand, a miniature copy of the famous Queen Anne inkstand in the Privy Council office, is engraved:—"This inkstand, together with the pen with which was signed the commission empowering the Lords Commissioners to declare the Royal Assent to the Australian Commonwealth Bill, and the table used on the occasion, were presented to the Commonwealth of Australia by Her Majesty Queen Victoria." These historic articles are to be conveyed to Sydney, and will no doubt be sacredly preserved.

The Royal College of Surgeons this year marks the completion of a century since it received its Royal Charter of Incorporation from George III, although for upwards of six centuries it can count its descent in a direct line back to a Guild of Surgeons which has existed in London. It is not surprising therefore that the Centenary has been celebrated with much *éclat*. On Tuesday a deputation of the College went to Marlborough House to present

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with the Diploma of Honorary Fellowship. On Wednesday evening a brilliant *Conversazione* was given at the Royal College in Lincoln's Inn Fields. On Thursday a Meeting and Reception was held in the Theatre of the University of London, Burlington Gardens, at which the Honorary Fellowship of the Society was conferred upon many illustrious male persons. In the evening of that day the Prince of Wales was present at the Festival Dinner; and on Friday the Lord and Lady Mayoress entertained the leading lights in the surgical world and their wives, and many other distinguished men and women, at a *Conversazione* at the Mansion House.

The memorial of Mrs. Gladstone will take the form of a fund for placing the Free Convalescent Home, Ravensbury House, Mitcham, on a permanent basis.

The London Homœopathic Hospital, Great Ormond Street, Bloomsbury, W.C., has received a donation of £50 "In Memoriam" from the father of an officer who was killed in action at Lindley, South Africa, on June 1.

At the annual meeting of the Church of England Burial, Funeral, and Mourning Reform Association, which was recently held at the Church House, Westminster, its excellent aims were expounded, it was urged that the society attempted to promote a wholesome and rational opinion on the question of the burial of the dead and funerals, to promote simplicity in funerals, to urge people to avoid all the hideousities not infrequently

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