

WHY are not these men engaged directly, as are the sisters of the Army Nursing Service Reserve? These Sisters are paid £40 a year, with allowances, and we believe the co-operations to which they belong have patriotically permitted their nurses to offer their services to the Government, and exempted them from paying any percentage as long as their services are required. This has been done by the committee of the Registered Nurses Society, and we hope by others.

ONE, however, begins to wonder whether this generosity has not been misplaced, and if it would not have been wiser, if less generous, to call upon the Government to pay the small percentage of 1s. 7d. in the guinea usually contributed by the nurse for the up-keep of her Society. Why should the Government pay Mr. Ley 7s. a head for his men, and nothing to the nurses co-operations which supplied it with thoroughly qualified and certificated Sisters?

A lay correspondent in the *Morning Post* makes a practical suggestion as to the treatment of insomnia—namely, that rocking from side to side should be tried, and that the beds of patients suffering from this malady should be placed on hammocks for the purpose. We well remember seeing, on a man-of-war, a bed so arranged that it swung with the motion of the ship. In this instance the idea was to prevent the occupant feeling the movement of the vessel, but it is one which might be adapted to the end described above. We all know the soothing influence exerted upon infants and young children by rocking, and it is reasonable to suppose that the principle might be applied to adults. At all events it is worth a trial.

Perennially the daily Press breaks out and bleats on the "nurse sweating question," and irate persons, who, however, prefer to remain anonymous, paint a sad picture of the over work, and under feeding of the average probationer, and end up with a sting in the tail for the "Matron." The *Daily Mail* has found a corner for these "wailers" of late, and "A Superfluous One" (the irony is her own) writes:—

"At present long hours, weary drudgery, poor food, and starvation pay are the only guerdons meted out to those who voluntarily devote their lives to the noblest of women's professions. It would seem to be a common theory among those in power over the nurses at our hospitals, more especially the London ones, that the weakest must go to the wall; and that it is only by exercising the most rigorous and harsh methods that the good grain is ever separated from the bad. The natural consequence of this system is

that a very great percentage of those who wish to devote their life to alleviating the sufferings of others are themselves left stranded, shattered in health and spirit and most of their illusions gone. Matrons of hospitals have little hesitation in letting their nurses know that their health is of secondary consideration, and that their services can be easily replaced with new material whenever there is a chance of their becoming worn out."

Now we are not denying that our nurse training schools are a very uncertain quantity—they are. Some are good and some are bad. Chaos lies back of them, and sooner or later order must be evolved out of disorder. But this will not be done so long as those so-called nursing schools are governed by a hotch-potch of fuss and philanthropy, nor until Committees, Matrons and Probationers, realise that the old order of things is obsolete, and the new order must be accepted and worked out.

Trained nursing is no longer domestic drudgery pure and simple; it is, and should be a very carefully defined science—going strongly along side the great science of medicine—otherwise it becomes a drag on the wheel of medical progress. The surgeon who would say to-day—as we heard one remark a while ago—"Any good housemaid will do for nurse," or again, "There's the girl for me, no nonsense about her," as a strapping Pro. marched down a ward with a bed pan (used) in one hand and a piece of bread and butter in the other—would "write himself down an ass."

But it is the financial side of this nursing question that has never received due consideration. In the old days a nurse did her scrubbing and her cleaning, and if she had time, polished up her patients as well. She was a ward servant, was paid as such, and catered for as such. But the woman willing to accept this position was superseded by the educated girl, *with a conscience*, hence these tears. This stamp of woman worried her heart out over neglected patients. She scrubbed and cleaned, and nursed and studied, all against time, and she broke her health, or her heart, or her temper, and if she survived it was because she was abnormally plucky. When, in her turn, she came to be Matron she had to begin fighting all over again, convincing dear old "city gentlemen" that a new order of things was imperative, and treading like a cat on hot bricks between the touchy toes of "eminent physicians and surgeons," who still, in the most lordly manner, ignore the existence of nursing as a science, although they are by no means loath to avail themselves of the highly trained skill which, in many instances, means life

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