

An appeal has been widely circulated in the daily Press for contributions to a Convalescent Fund, organized by Georgina, Countess of Dudley, on behalf of wounded officers, and of nurses who have broken down under the strain of the war. The appeal is, no doubt kindly meant, but we cannot but regret that before it was issued Lady Dudley did not consult with leading nurses, or societies of nurses, and find out the feeling of the profession on the matter. We have no hesitation in saying that the strong feeling of the majority of nurses would be against being held up to the public *in formâ pauperis*. Moreover, we do not think there is a hospital or convalescent home in the Kingdom which would not willingly receive a nurse, invalided in the performance of her duty in South Africa, for suitable treatment or rest. There is a certain bluntness of feeling, and a lack of delicacy of perception, in holding a profession up to view as a suitable object of public alms, without taking the trouble to enquire whether such a course of action is agreeable to its members.

Of the Fund administered by Georgina Lady Dudley, up to the present time £33,312 has been expended for the benefit of thirteen hundred and nineteen officers, and £2,528 for the benefit of two hundred and seventeen nurses. We are told that "about 50 per cent. of the nurses assisted have been connected with the Army, and the Army Nursing Reserve. The remainder were colonial and volunteer nurses, in charge of sick and wounded on each home-coming transport. Many of these nurses were themselves invalids, greatly in want of rest." Lady Dudley's report affords food for reflection. Are our sick and wounded on home-coming transports really nursed by "invalids greatly in want of rest?"

Dr. Foley, Bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, has addressed a letter to the Chairman of the Board of Guardians of the Carlow Union, in which he says:—

"As the question of re-arranging the nursing staff of the workhouse will, I understand, come up for consideration by your Board as soon as you receive the recommendation of the L.G.B., I think it my duty to direct the attention of the Guardians to the matter, which may be attended with very serious consequences to the nursing arrangements of the Infirmary. The matter to which I refer is the status of such trained nurses as may have to be appointed in accordance with the mandate of the L.G.B. I have no idea of what the views of the L.G.B. may be, but I feel satisfied unless such nurses be given distinctly to understand that they will be under the directions not alone of the Medical Officer, but also of the Sister who has been appointed head nurse of the Infirmary, the Guardians will ulti-

mately find themselves compelled to hand over the whole care of the sick poor to such nurses, and to deprive the Infirmary of the devoted service which it has received from the nuns for so many years. On the other hand, if, as I anticipate, the L.G.B. make no objection to the condition, the appointment of a trained night nurse ought to be an improvement on the existing arrangements. Whether it will really be an improvement time alone can tell, but a great deal will depend on the class of person who will be appointed, and also upon the terms of her appointment. This is all that I find it my duty to convey to the Guardians, but with respect to another matter, the appointment of a trained nurse, it may be well that I should add that as far as I can see, there is neither need nor justification for any such thing in the circumstances of the locality.

"In my opinion all cases requiring the services of a specially trained nurse, such as acute cases or cases requiring surgical treatment, should be sent to the institution which was primarily established for the purpose—viz., the County Infirmary. I fail to see any justification whatever for a system of administration which would set up separate establishments in such a town as Carlow, for these two classes of cases which can be properly treated in one institution, staffed and equipped after the manner of the County Infirmary."

We must confess that it appears to us the Bishop has no *locus standi* in the position he has assumed, nor any qualifications to enable him to judge what constitutes an efficient nursing staff. The question of nursing by nuns is plain. Either they must qualify themselves as trained nurses, in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Board, or they must allow the nursing to pass into other hands. So long as they decline to pass through the entire curriculum required of lay nurses, and gain the certificates of a nurse-training school, so long, again, as they refuse to care for certain classes of cases, or to attend the sick at all by night, it appears to us arrogant to demand that they shall be placed in positions of authority over certificated nurses, who realize the obligations of their profession.

The Local Government Board for Ireland will scarcely draw up regulations for the nursing of infirmaries, exempting one class of persons from producing evidence of professional competence on the score of their piety. Surely the Bishops should recognize that this demand is as untenable as it is unjust. If not, it remains for properly trained nurses to say whether they are willing to accept subordinate positions under unqualified women, even though these women be religious sisters. We should be the last to undervalue the work of sisters, but if they assume the superintendence of trained nurses they must qualify themselves for the position.

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