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EDITED BY MRS. BEDFORD FENWICK.

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PROFICIT DEFICIT."

No. 721.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 1902.

VOL. XXVIII.

Editorial.

A DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE APPOINTED.

FOR some time it has been a matter of common knowledge that the difficulty of obtaining nurses for country workhouse infirmaries, and for others where the infirmary is attached to the workhouse, has been extreme, and repeated advertisements frequently fail to bring applications, for posts advertised, from suitable candidates. Things have now reached an acute stage; we learn that the lives of the Local Government Board Inspectors have become a burden to them owing to the constant friction in connection with workhouse infirmaries, and the frequent necessity for enquiries, and we have only to study the voluminous evidence which was recently taken in connection with the Dudley Workhouse enquiry to understand the disorganization, and consequently the suffering to the sick, which frequently prevails. It is, therefore, welcome news that the President of the Local Government Board has appointed from among the officers of the Department a committee to enquire into the subject of the nursing of the sick poor in workhouses, consisting of Mr. Grant

Lawson, M.P. (Parliamentary Secretary), Mr. W. E. Knollys, C.B. (Chief General Inspector and one of the assistant secretaries), and Dr. A. H. Downes, and Dr. A. Fuller (Poor Law Medical Inspectors), with Mr. R. H. A. G. Duff as Secretary. The committee will enquire and report as to the qualifications of nurses and probationers, the difficulties in obtaining an adequate supply of these officers, and the regulations necessary to define the respective duties of the Master or Matron and of the Superintendent Nurse.

WHY NO WOMEN?

We regret that no women, whether experienced Matrons who have had charge of the nursing in Poor Law Infirmaries or in large general hospitals, or women guardians, have been co-opted on to this committee. Their assistance would have been most valuable, for at the root of the trouble in connection with nursing under the Local Government Board is the question of discipline, and discipline amongst women was never yet effectively administered by men. This plan has been tried and it has failed, as it will fail in the future. Again, nursing is now so highly specialised a profession that the expert advice of experienced women on practical points

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