

which gained the £40 prize of the Academy Schools in 1900. The grouping of the twelve figures in the painting—which is in oils on canvas—is wonderfully effective.

A recent issue of the *Guy's Hospital Gazette*, under the heading "Hospital Types," has something to say of "The Sister." "The most noticeable thing about her is that she is superior. The Sister stands high above ordinary mortals. She has attained this giddy height by a long and difficult journey, which has cleansed her from all the usual imperfections and weaknesses of a woman, and given her great knowledge and power. You feel, or ought to feel, in her presence what a miserable worm you are. Any little knowledge that you may have thought you possessed is as nothing compared to her limitless stores, and you thankfully receive the crumbs she may give you, in the shape of instructions as to the dressing of your cases, the hour at which you may visit the ward, and the hour at which you may *not* visit the ward. If you are grateful and humble she may graciously go further and teach you many very wonderful things about life in general, and the correct and orthodox way to face its difficulties. . . . 'Wonderful are the ways of Sisters, and not to be understood by any mere man,' and we watch with sorrow the nurses we knew as quite nice people appear in their blue gowns and crystallise into lofty perfection."

It is only comparatively recently that hospital Sisters of mature age and many years' professional experience have had the advantage of students' journals to enable them to see themselves as others see them. No doubt they will thankfully receive the crumbs of instruction thus imparted to them, and amend ways which are not acceptable to their critics.

Dr. Spurrell, Medical Superintendent of the Poplar and Stepney Sick Asylum, has pointed out to the *Guardians* that the accommodation for nurses and domestics is insufficient, and he has been instructed to confer with the architects with a view to bringing up a report as to the erection of a building to provide the accommodation named on the ground recently occupied by the temporary laundry and adjoining the first and second pavilions. An isolation room for sick nurses, more single bedrooms, and a recreation and bed rooms for the maids are amongst urgent needs to keep the staff in health and happiness.

The condition of discipline in the wards of the Hackney Infirmary was demonstrated in the course of the evidence given by the son of a deceased patient at the inquest. He said that when visiting his father he was asked to leave the ward, and immediately heard sounds of quarrelling and of chairs being knocked over. He was informed that

two attendants had been fighting, and that they fell on the bed of his dying father. Frederick Hall, night lunatic attendant, said he went to Dennen, the head nurse, owing to an alleged omission on the part of a male attendant named Dalton. Dennen returned with witness to the ward. After high words, there was a struggle between Dennen and Dalton. The latter seized Dennen by the throat, and in the struggle they fell across the bed of the dying man, without, however, hurting him. Dr. Gordon, Medical Superintendent, said the death was due to natural causes, and was not accelerated by the disturbance; the *Guardians* were considering the matter, and one or both of the attendants would have to go.

So we should imagine, if the head nurse is only able to keep his subordinates in order by resorting to blows over the beds of dying patients.

Brigade Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel A. B. R. Myers (ret'd.), in reference to a letter published in a recent issue of the *British Medical Journal* with regard to the experiences of trained nurses as stewardesses on a passenger ship (to which allusion was made in these columns), expresses the opinion that it is difficult to believe that no proper accommodation was provided for them. He expresses doubt whether the captain can have stated that the Board of Trade could not compel the provision of sleeping accommodation for servants. Having had some experience of sea voyages, he does not believe that there is any need for trained nurses on board ship. The doctors are always ready to help the stewards and stewardesses in nursing if need be. It might be a good thing if stewardesses received some training in nursing, though their avocation gives them a good deal of practical experience in doing what is required; and an officer friend of his, with fifteen years' experience, has never had a case which required special nursing.

We may point out (1) that the training received by a medical man qualifies him to *treat* the sick, not to undertake practical nursing duties; (2) that the time of stewards and stewardesses is fully occupied in the performance of the duties which they are engaged to perform by the shipping companies. In consideration of the free time they have while a ship is in harbour, they are on duty for very long hours during a voyage, frequently from 5.45 a.m. to 11 p.m.; and, consequently, that (3) even if they possessed the knowledge enabling them to give skilled attendance to sick passengers—which they do not—they have no time to do so. In our experience, the large majority of cases which need medical advice need nursing also, therefore it seems likely that if for fifteen years a medical officer met with no case which required special nursing there were not a large number which re-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)