

"We may certainly hope that in another ten years' time, when the influence of the new Midwives' Act begins to make itself felt, the death-rate not only in London but all over the kingdom will show signs of a steady decrease. In view of the very high death-rate in childbed, which Dr. Boxall has shown to prevail in Ireland, it is all the more to be regretted that the new Act does not apply to that country."

There seems to be a considerable lack of discipline among the nurses at the Sculcoates Workhouse Infirmary, and we are glad that, on the motion of the Chairman, Mr. J. Beal, a special committee has been appointed to investigate the management of the infirmary in the presence of the Local Government Board Inspector, Mr. Bagenal, L.G.B. inspector, having expressed a desire that the circumstances under which a probationer left the infirmary should be thoroughly investigated.

In relation to this probationer, Dr. Lilley said that an urgent case had to be attended to in the middle of the night, which resulted in the night superintendent telling the probationer to leave one or two other cases for the other nurses who came on early. Those nurses resented having anything left, and the bickering and noise went on until after breakfast, when the probationer sought an interview with the superintendent nurse. The latter, according to the probationer, showed favouritism towards the other nurses, and that made the probationer all the more annoyed, and she left the building. The Committee, the speaker went on to say, could not get information from the girls. The probationer in question accused two other nurses of something. The Medical Officer said that he would bring the nurses before the Committee, but when he went for them they would not come. That was the dilemma the Committee were in. It was also stated that the request of a dying inmate, who had asked a nurse to write a few lines to a friend for her, had been refused.

At a recent meeting of the Portsmouth Guardians the Infirmary Committee submitted the report of Dr. J. H. Bryant, of Guy's Hospital, as to the examination in proficiency of the probationer nurses in training. Dr. Bryant states that he examined the nurses of the Portsmouth Infirmary in elementary anatomy and physiology and nursing. Ten third-year nurses presented themselves, and all obtained a sufficient number of marks to pass. They were Nurses Packer and Pearson (who obtained over 75 per cent. of the possible number of marks), Crocker, Waite, Walton, Pearce, Oakes, Bradley, Hill, and Reynolds. They were all recommended for certificates. Six second-year nurses sat for the examination, and all obtained the necessary number of marks. Seventeen first-year probationers sent in papers, of whom seven were rejected.

"On the whole," Dr. Bryant states, "the work of the first-year nurses was very poor, and much below

the usual standard of this and other infirmaries. In this particular batch of candidates there appears to have been a falling-off in the general standard of education." The question of the standard of general education requisite for probationers was discussed at some length, and one member of the Board suggested that the time had come when the Infirmary Committee should draw up a list of qualifications and throw the vacant positions for probationers on the staff open to public examination.

Mr. Boss said practically they had nothing to do with the appointment of these probationers as a committee. If he were put on oath and asked if the Infirmary Committee ruled the institution, he would say they did not, and they had no knowledge as to the qualifications of the young women who came before them. The Clerk and two medical practitioners should draw up a series of questions to be put to candidates on entering, and he gave notice of his intention to put a resolution on the agenda paper to that effect.

We fail to understand how the Clerk is concerned in setting educational standards for nurses; and why the Matron, who is responsible for the practical training of probationers, and the efficiency of the nursing service, should be absolutely ignored.

Mr. Pickles was of opinion, in relation to Dr. Bryant's report, that the questions put at the examination were too hard. He could not spell half the words himself.

With reference to the discussion which has been taking place on the Continent concerning the excellence of the hospitals and medical service in Japan, a Frenchman who has spent some years in Russia writes to the *Courrier Européen* on the subject of the hospitals in Russia. He lived in a large town of 200,000 inhabitants, which was full of doctors and possessed one public hospital. This institution was huge, filthy, and badly situated. The patients were all crowded together anyhow, three who were suffering from consumption being placed with the rest. In one ward twenty-five sick persons were packed closely together, with the result that they could hardly sleep or breathe, and the dirtiness of the place and the carelessness of the doctors were beyond belief. The writer himself went to a hospital, which was recommended to him as new and well-appointed, suffering from fever, and was placed in a small bedroom. His temperature was very high, but the doctor never came near him for two days, and the attendance could hardly be said to exist. One day he tried to ring the bell, but it was broken, and in despair he endeavoured to get out of bed by himself. He fainted in the attempt, and the noise of his fall attracted the attention of one of the nurses. If this is the way in which a new and well-appointed hospital is conducted in a large town, it is not surprising that the medical arrangements at the front leave much to be desired.

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