

And this task of his was by no means confined to the opening of his reign. He frequently fulfilled it wherever he went, and a diarist of 1556, who witnessed the whole proceeding at Fontainebleau, has left us a picture of what he saw.

"That same day," he writes, "when every one came out from Mass in the Palace Chapel, a large number of sick people were placed in order on the Road of the Lake of Fontainebleau—a fine, broad road leading to the King's Palace . . . sheltered by the side of divers great trees, that are planted in rows . . . and beneath this shade, on their knees, were the aforesaid invalids, who were waiting for His Majesty to come out from Mass and to touch them. The which he did very humbly, in no wise disdain the poor sick, howsoever ravaged by disease, but touching their faces with his right hand, saying: 'I touch thee, may God cure thee!' Monsieur the Grand Almoner, Louis de Brézé, stood behind the poor people, and, by the King's orders, he gave to each a piece of money as an alms, saying unto them, 'Pray God for the King.' This being done, His Majesty admonished them to be ever good Christians . . . devoutly serving God, the Virgin Mary, and Monsieur St. Marcoul—the which we witnessed with our own eyes, being at that very time in the town of Fontainebleau."

The scene is a curious mixture of arrogance and homeliness.

Dr. Glynn Whittle, of Liverpool, writes in the *Lancet* on the subject of the Registration of Nursing Homes, as follows:—

It is to be hoped that the proposal to obtain registration and supervision of nursing institutions will not be relegated to a distant future through lack of the necessary advocacy in the medical Press. Hospitals are protected by their appeals for public support, which entails a wholesome spirit of criticism, duly leavening the munificence of the charitable. State infirmaries, workhouses, and similar places for the sick are inspected as well as run out of the taxes and rates. Private establishments, however, escape any expert inspection, although they are attracting and carrying out an increasing amount of serious work.

It is inevitable that the struggling inseparable from keen competition, notwithstanding in many cases the best intentions, will occasion untold mischief in a certain proportion of so-called Nursing Homes at the expense of patients who have accepted positions in which they are no longer able to decide for themselves what is the best course for them to follow unless Government steps in with a watchful care of the interests of the sick and an eye by no means unfriendly on the management.

All precedent establishes that institutions found to be honest and successful in the work they carry out only gain in popularity and prestige by becoming responsible to the State for their efficiency. Experience of practice, private as well as hospital, should be an indispensable qualification of the gentlemen appointed inspectors, who should be required to give their whole time to the new duties. A few would suffice for Great Britain and Ireland.

We agree with the main arguments of this letter, but we do not follow the writer when he assumes that inspectors of Nursing Homes must of necessity be gentlemen. The principal points which it will be necessary to investigate in such Homes are the sanitary conditions and the nursing arrangements. No suggestion has been made of the oversight of the work of the medical staff, nor is this in any way necessary or contemplated. But any competent Sanitary Inspector, male or female, could undertake the supervision of the sanitary matters, while the nursing arrangements would be best supervised by an experienced and certificated nurse. Medical education does not include instruction in the details of nursing organisation and domestic management.

At the weekly meeting of the Youghal Board of Guardians recently the Night Nurse, Miss M'Laughlin sent in a month's notice of resignation. The medical officer, Dr. D. J. Murphy, said they were losing their nurses constantly. It was extremely hard on a young person to be up night after night, all the year round, from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. without help or rest in the infirmary. It was a very grave responsibility to place on one nurse the care of 100 patients every night.

The doctor, in reply to questions, said that five or six patients, sometimes more, died in the course of the week, and the Master said he had known as many as ten deaths. Mr. Kennedy said that in well-equipped hospitals a nurse was not supposed to look after more than fifteen patients. It was a monstrous thing for their nurse to be looking after 100 patients, some of them dying.

It is quite impossible that a nurse should give adequate attention to this number of patients; further, to require a young woman to keep solitary vigil night after night all the year round in attendance on this number of patients is inevitably to breakdown her health while attending to theirs. The appointment of night nurse should not be a permanent one, but day and night-nurses should exchange duties at regular intervals of not more than three months, and preferably of two. Apparently in the Youghal Infirmary the patients are attended by nuns during the daytime. Surely they would be willing to take their share of night duty. The Guardians have now appointed a ward-maid to assist the night nurse, but this is not sufficient. The sooner alterations are made the better.

The illness of Baron Komura at the Waldorf Hotel, New York, has puzzled his medical attendants, who diagnosed it as typhoid fever. The latest accounts are, however, more re-assuring. This theory has now been abandoned, and the speedy convalescence of the patient is anticipated. Meanwhile two trained nurses are in attendance.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)