

the nurses, succeeding generations of whom have waited most loyally and patiently for the last quarter of a century for a Home worthy of the great foundation with which they regard it an honour to be associated.

At the dinner at the Savoy Hotel, held in connection with the opening of the Winter Session at the London Hospital, Mr. Eve, who presided, gave an interesting account of the hospital as it was just 100 years ago; which was based upon some documents which have recently been unearthed by the secretary, Mr. E. W. Morris. Among the more curious points mentioned were that at that time only two meals were served a day, breakfast of water gruel and bread, and dinner consisting five days a week of meat and on two of pea-soup. The hospital secretary was also chaplain, and responsible for the interment of deceased patients in the hospital grounds. The funerals had to be attended by such patients as could leave their beds, and an entry showed that on one occasion the clerk had been reprimanded for reading the service over a number of bodies together instead of separately. At night the wards were left unattended, for the nurses, then known as watchers, were only on duty in the daytime. The head porter and Matron had their meals together, living on the leavings of the apothecary. The latter, a person of great importance, was allowed to take pupils, who slept under the counters of the dispensary. A Black book was kept, in which were recorded the names of patients who ran away to avoid the terrors of an operation.

We are informed by Dr. Toogood, Medical Superintendent, that the authorities of the Lewisham Infirmary have no knowledge of any report made by a lady inspector to the Local Government Board concerning the untidiness of the nurses' hair, and a consequent order issued by the Matron of that institution.

It appears impossible for the realistic school of novelists to keep the pen off the trained nurse—and we have a glimpse of her in "The Wondrous Wife," in which Mr. Charles Marriott gives the following distorted description of "Doctor Land in London":

"The gloomy decency of Wimpole Street on a November afternoon depressed him. All the externals of the medical quarter of London, he thought, seemed to suggest a vested interest for the exploitation, rather than the cure, of disease. It was the home of a malign order prospering on secrecy and shame; an order that made not for enlightenment, but for superstition, that suppressed knowledge for its own ends. It was impossible to believe that

young and ardent men were to be found within the solid houses with their heavy doors opening at intervals to furtive comings and goings, or in the silent, swiftly-rolling carriages. In imagination, he saw sable plumes nodding above the parapets, and smelt the odour of death. At any moment the oppressive quiet of the place might be broken by a muffled scream of agony. Even the nurses walking the pavements, in their austere uniforms, seemed to be devoting their youth to point a ghastly moral to the other sisterhood in Regent Street."

Would that these uniforms were austere, or even sanitary—not to refer to good taste. Uniform as worn by the average West End nurse of the day is a travesty of what should be in every sense a becoming costume. When one sees soiled aprons worn in the street, open-work stockings, and "greenery yallery" shoes, to say nothing of the dingy scraps of straw, supposed to be bonnets, perched on matted masses of hairy sausage rolls, one longs for a pitchfork to consign the whole costume to the passing dust cart. Every foreign nurse who visits London is astounded at the costumes worn by nurses in the street as "uniform."

The question of the diets allowed to the higher officials in workhouses and infirmaries, including members of the nursing staff, is one which has recently been engaging the attention of the Press, and through it of rate-payers. The amount of sustenance which these officials are supposed to need certainly seems enormous, but it should not be forgotten that wherever rations are allowed waste is inevitable. The best plan for all concerned is to make a money allowance per head for house-keeping expenses, and then to permit the housekeeper wide discretion of selection within that margin.

We note that County Nursing Associations are now adopting very lofty titles for their institutions, in which they usually "train" women for sick nursing in rural districts in a few months. "The Devon and Cornwall Training School and Home for Nurses and the Three Towns Nursing Association" must convey to the pupils and patients that it is a very thorough "school" indeed. We have ever regretted that these short term and necessarily inefficient "homes" are permitted to term themselves "schools," and by affiliation with the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses obtain a prestige to which they are not entitled.

Our Editorial remarks in a recent issue in reference to the appointment of nurses at the Borough Isolation Hospital, Bangor, entitled

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)