

THE
INTERNATIONAL

Nursing Record.

"QUI NON PROFICIT, DEFICIT."

No. 99.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20th, 1890.

VOL. 4.

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EDITORIAL.

HOSPITAL APPOINTMENTS.—I.

A MATTER to which but scanty attention has hitherto been directed, although it is of great importance, and greater interest, to Nurses individually and collectively, is the method by which Hospital and other appointments are made. We do not of course refer to Probationerships, but especially to those prizes, such as Sister-ships and Matronships, which are or should be obtainable only after the period of training has been completed. We do not close our eyes to the advantages of the system at present adopted, and frankly acknowledge the many most excellent selections, which have been, and are being, constantly made of ladies to fill these responsible posts. But as an abstract proposition we desire to urge that, as in the great republic of medicine, where every Student commences work with the possibility before him of rising to the first rank of his profession, so it should be made clear to every Probationer, that by energy, work, and knowledge alone promotion can be gained in her calling.

This is a principle which has been acknowledged in every country, and in nearly every craft. It is

a matter of common knowledge, for example, how greatly the popularity, and indeed even the efficiency, of the British Army has increased since the abolition of purchased steps left more to merit and less to money in securing promotion. Favouritism and influence will, doubtless, always be potent factors in obtaining advancement in life, just as it is equally true that it is possible the world has always in every grade men of genius, who only require a favourable opportunity to win recognition and great success. And so, on the one hand, it might be predicted that until the end of time those Nurses who have influential friends will secure appointments, and on the other that those workers who have not such supporters may, although of equal or even greater ability, be unable to attain similar success.

Such at least has undoubtedly been the rule hitherto. But unless we misread the signs of the times a new order of things is imminent. It is one of the necessary results of the influx of gentlewomen into the Nursing profession, that there is every year an increasing amount of competition in the higher, as well as in the lower ranks. And not only so, but the keenness of the competition tends constantly to increase, inasmuch as a much larger number of competitors are able to bring influence to bear upon the electors to Matronships and other Hospital posts, than was formerly the case.

Quite recently we were informed by a member of the Committee of Management of one of our public Institutions, that formerly about a dozen applications were received when their Matron's place became vacant, perhaps a bare quorum of the committee could be persuaded to attend the meeting, and her election was made in half-an-hour. Lately the applications for the post numbered nearly two hundred. Every personal friend every member of the Committee possessed appeared to be also a personal friend of one or more of the candidates, and morning, noon, and night came letters asking for votes and influence

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