

Reflections.

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.

Lady Helen Munro-Ferguson presided at the annual meeting of the New Hospital for Women, Euston Road, last week, and in moving the adoption of the report and accounts expressed regret that a considerable portion of their investments had been sold to pay current expenses. The first essential of national defence was a vigorous population, and that was impossible if they did not have a vigorous race of mothers. The report, which, among other things, stated that Mrs. William Smith had given £5,000 towards the endowment of a new ward, was adopted. Miss Jenner, in moving the re-election of the Management Committee, said further financial support was needed. She thought some people were taking away their support and giving it to the Suffrage movement. As soon as the sex disqualification was removed women would give more liberally.

At the annual meeting of the London Homoeopathic Hospital, held on the 5th inst., it was reported that legacies amounted to £7,313 and three beds had been endowed during the year by payment, or legacy of, £1,000. The Garden Fête and Sale of Work at Lady Perks' house, organised by the Ladies' Guild, and opened by H.R.H. the Duchess of Argyll, realised £790, after payment of all expenses, and the Board are endeavouring to provide a home for the nurses of the hospital. It is estimated the cost, including the freehold site, will be about £25,000, and donations and subscriptions for that purpose may be sent to the Secretary, Mr. Edward A. Attwood, at the Hospital, Great Ormond Street, W.C.

The Medical Officer of the Local Government Board has issued a memorandum to Councils of Metropolitan and other boroughs and of urban and rural districts setting forth the action which may be taken against tuberculosis under the powers conferred on sanitary authorities.

A Sub-Committee of the Glasgow Corporation Sub-Committee on Hospitals recommended recently that to minimise the risk of cross infection at Ruchill an observation block, divided into ten separate wards, for the accommodation of 48 patients, be erected at an estimated cost of £7,500. The Hospitals Sub-Committee has recommended that it approves the report on the necessity for the erection of an observation ward, but has remitted back the remainder for further consideration.

We regret to report the death of Mr. Thomas Wakley, Editor of the *Lancet*, whose funeral took place on Wednesday at Putney Vale Cemetery. He was grandson of the late Mr. Thomas Wakley, M.P., Coroner, and founder of the *Lancet*, a man of vigorous personality and a born reformer, whose journal fought tenaciously in its youth, eighty years ago, for the organisation of the medical profession, just as the *BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING* has done to build up a Profession of Nursing.

The "Minority Report" of the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws.

Four of the Commissioners, viz., Prebendary Russell Wakefield, Mrs. Sidney Webb, Mr. Francis Chandler, and Mr. George Lansbury, did not agree altogether in the conclusions deduced by the Majority from the evidence heard by them when sitting as the Royal Commission. These four have therefore abstained from signing the Report, and have preferred to issue a separate one of their own, detailing at some length their conclusions and recommendations. It is noteworthy that, apart from their views expressed on this occasion, these four Commissioners are well known to the outside public—one as a Christian Socialist, one as a prominent Fabian, and the other two as leaders of the Labour Party. Their conclusions and recommendations have, therefore, a peculiar significance to those interested in social subjects.

1. The Minority agree with the Majority in advocating the abolition of the present workhouse on the ground that all "new or old, large or small, sumptuous or squalid, exhibit the same inherent defects of which the chief are promiscuity and un-specialised management."

2. They also agree that "Boards of Guardians in England, Wales, and Ireland (at any rate as far as Poor Law functions are concerned), the Parish Councils in Scotland . . . should be abolished."

3. The New Authority.—It will be remembered that the "Majority" of the Commissioners recommended the creation of new Local Authorities to carry out a reformed system of Poor Law, and they suggested that these controlling authorities should be *nominated* bodies, known as Public Assistance Authorities and Committees; the Public Assistance Authorities to be a Statutory Committee of the County Council, the members of which it was laid down should be *nominated* by the County Council. It will further be remembered that Dr. Downes differed from the "Majority" about the Constitution of this new Local Authority: instead of a wholly nominated body, he advised a composite one partly nominated, partly elected, and *not* an adjunct of the County Council. The Minority Report advocates a scheme whereby the work hitherto performed by Boards of Guardians should be handed over to County and County Borough Councils; the members of these are, of course, all directly elected persons.

A system of classification is urged, and is suggested that it should run on these lines.

(a) A broad distinction to be made between the non-able-bodied and the able-bodied (the able-bodied to include unemployed workmen, vagrants, etc.).

(b) As regards the non-able-bodied, the Education Committee of the County Council to take charge of children of school age.

The Health Committee of the County Council the care of the sick, infants under school age, and the aged needing institutional care.

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