

where an outbreak of cholera recently carried off six members of the nursing staff and others, and also at the Medical College Hospital.

We agree with the following editorial expression of opinion on the *Statesman's* part:—

"If these figures represent the full sum expended on food for the nursing staff, no cause for surprise exists in the complaint made in the Report that there is still "much difficulty in retaining the services of good nurses at the Medical College Hospital." The problem involved in the future of the nursing staffs assumes two aspects. In the first place common humanity demands that women who devote themselves in this exacting climate to the nursing of the sick should receive just and considerate treatment. In the second, the efficiency of the nurses depends on the conditions under which they live, and anything that tends to impair their health or comfort must re-act on the patients committed to their charge. Humanity and self-interest alike, therefore, demand that the question should not be allowed to drop until convincing evidence is adduced that the administration of the hospitals has been placed on a sound and efficient basis."

The Managers of the Medical College Hospital excuse their summary discharge of the nurse who communicated the nursing conditions to the press by stating that "the nurse was serving under no agreement, and was entitled to no legal notice," to which the editor of the *Statesman* trenchantly replies:—

"Our contention is that a hospital nurse is entitled to courteous and considerate treatment, agreement or no agreement. She should also be able to claim a reasonable amount of liberty, including the right of sending a letter to a newspaper, like any other free citizen who is not in Government service. A hospital is not a young ladies' academy, but a public institution in which a number of educated women pursue an honourable profession, and the best type of nurse can only be secured by recognising the facts. Unfortunately, the Bengal Government do not touch upon the principles involved. Their intervention indeed simply amounts to a declaration that the explanation of a Hospital Committee upon cases of discipline will be accepted without investigation—a policy which is not likely to ensure efficient administration, for its effect will be to reduce to terrified silence well informed criticism of the inner working of the hospitals."

The Chorlton Guardians have decided to appoint a woman inspector to watch the children of persons who receive outdoor relief, the object of the supervision being to secure the proper attention and clothing of the children. It is computed that the number of children that will come under the proposal are between 1,600 and 1,700. The experiment will, no doubt, be watched with interest by other Boards of Guardians.

The Kistin.

Kist—A coffin, a chest.

Kistin—The ceremony of putting a corpse into a coffin.

—A Dictionary of the Scottish Language,
By CLERISHOTHAM THE YOUNGER.

Old customs die hard, especially in country districts, and the Scot (who is naturally of a morbid temperament) clings tenaciously to the Kistin.

"Ben the hoose" are assembled the family, the relatives, and intimate neighbours, lining the walls at least two deep, and, as the room since the death has (figuratively speaking) been hermetically sealed, the atmosphere is choking.

The men look constrained and uncomfortable in Sabbath clothes; the womenkind also have discarded their working garb in favour of the best gown, and have donned a clean check apron to honour the occasion.

On a built-in bed, covered with a fine linen sheet (which only does duty on like occasions), lies the central figure in the drama; its presence hushes the assembly, who converse in low tones about the last illness, the gap made in the family, interspersed with audible sighs, which are interrupted by the arrival of the undertaker with the coffin, to receive which three chairs have been placed side by side in the centre of the room.

By this time the minister has put in an appearance, which is the signal that the proceedings may commence.

A female relative or neighbour, who has assisted in nursing the deceased, has the honour of removing the sheet; and the undertaker, and three male relatives, approach the bed to lift the remains into the coffin.

The relative position of the coffin in the centre of the room to the figure on the bed is head to foot; the nearest relative supports the head, another takes both ends of the folded towel which has been placed under the shoulders, a third the towel under the hips, the fourth that placed just below the knees; all lift simultaneously, a half circle is made, and the burden is gently lowered into its last resting place; the towels are withdrawn, the veil is lifted, and the friends draw near to look for the last time at the face now so unfamiliar.

After all have taken a lingering look, the lid is put on, and each screw inserted in a silence only broken by the sobs of the company.

The minister (who has hitherto been one apart) now moves forward to the inside of the circle, and with open book commences to read passages of Scripture appropriate to the occasion. "In Rama was there a voice heard,

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)