

POOR LAW INFIRMARY MATRONS' ASSOCIATION.

A well-attended meeting of the Poor Law Infirmary Matrons' Association was held on Saturday last at St. Marylebone Infirmary. Miss Cockrell presided. There was a good attendance. The following questions and subjects for discussion, which had been sent to the Hon. Secretary by different members, were put before the meeting in turn and evoked very interesting discussions:—

1. Is it the general practice to teach invalid cooking in infirmaries of from 200 to 300 beds?
2. Is it the usual custom at the infirmaries represented by the matrons present to put special nurses to nurse a case of erysipelas, and are these nurses kept entirely separate and not allowed to mix with others at meals?
3. What is the usual custom about giving testimonials? Do the matrons allow any of their nursing staff to retain testimonials given by the matron (to help them to obtain posts) while they are still working in the building?
4. What is the usual practice in reference to the care of the soiled and ward linen of the phthisical wards and lock cases?
5. Could the Infirmary Matrons' Association do anything towards improving the position of superintendent nurses in workhouses?
6. Could a course of post-graduate lectures be arranged?

THE SAIREY GAMP "AT HOME."

So many people want to know if the Sairey Gamp "At Home" is in aid of the Dickens Fund that we wish to make it quite plain that it is not. The price of tickets (3s. and 5s.) leaves little margin for profits, but if there should be any, it will be handed over to the general fund of the National Council of Nurses. The object of the gathering is simply to commemorate the Centenary of Charles Dickens, who, in the opinion of the nursing profession, did such a monumental work in the impetus which he gave to reform in the management of Poor Law institutions and hospitals, not to mention nursing. The present generation does not know its Dickens as intimately as it should do; and the preparing to impersonate one of his inimitable characters has led to much solid and enjoyable reading amongst those who intend to accept Sairey Gamp's invitation on February 7th at the Doré Gallery.

Miss Cutler would like it known that busy people, who cannot find time to prepare a

Dickens costume, may attend the "At Home" in evening dress or uniform. Tickets can be obtained from Mrs. Hunter, Nurses' Home, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, E.C.

NO MONOPOLY PERMISSIBLE.

The position of women under the National Insurance Act is a very unsatisfactory one, more especially for those of the professional classes, like trained nurses, whose salaries are very limited. The Act is framed to meet the needs of men and manual labourers. But as employed women are compelled to insure, the question which presents itself to their immediate attention is what best return they can get for their money. And we claim that they are wise to inquire into every detail for themselves, and, if they choose, to form their own Approved Friendly Societies, as the Act permits.

This right, one would have imagined, would never have been questioned, and yet week by week the anti-registration organ of the Royal National Pension Fund (practically an Insurance and not a Pension Society, on the same business basis as any other) claims that it, and it alone, should organize and control the Nurses' compulsory contributions and their State subsidy provided for under the Act. From this claim we hope trained nurses will at once dissent. The Act gives them a right to manage their own affairs in this connection, and we advise them to do so.

We surmise that there will be very little surplus for the special benefits trained women nurses require unless their finances are most carefully conserved, and the cost of administration very economically administered. Such economy in women's societies administered by men is seldom a marked feature of their management, whereas all the Nurses' Societies managed by themselves, transact an immense amount of business for a very reasonable outlay. We want no palatial offices—such as that in which the Royal National Pension Fund is now housed—nor any costly secretarial department. We want the best-paid posts filled by women instead of men, and we know that unless we manage our own affairs we shall have as little power in a Nurses' Friendly Society as the policy-holders of the Royal National Pension Fund have in administering its financial business. Anyway, no monopoly is permissible, and as only about one-fifth of the nursing profession is insured in the Pension Fund, we hope the nursing profession as a whole will assume its rightful responsibility and manage its own Approved Society.

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