

A correspondent who has worked in French Hospitals sends us the following note:—

In France, in many hospitals the nursing is done by what we in England would consider ward maids or porters. When there are nuns in a hospital they have the general management and do far less actual nursing than an English Sister does in her ward.

In hospitals where there are no nuns the posts of supervision are given to those who entered the hospital as kitchen maid or ward maid, and who in their turn have under their orders the same class of woman.

The staff is always inadequate, so the able-bodied patients come to the rescue on condition that they receive payment, and it generally takes the form of wine or food.

For a glass of wine a patient will clean the brasses; for an egg a day another will clean the instruments. The nurses "manage" to have a stock which they use to get the work done. They never think it would be better to economise on the diet sheet and openly ask for more help.

Hospital managers are proud of their small staff, and say they have never had any complaints.

The nurse-ward-maids or men sleep in the wards.

Little by little the ward maid accumulates a few clothes, the patients give her pictures and boxes. Soon the spring is filled up with things, the locker overflows with bottles and crockery. By and by the bigger things are put in a corner of the splint room, and then extra patients come in.

The ward maid camps in the splint room. Then she must eat by the side of her bed, as all respecting ward maids do. Then she begins to be at home and receives a few visitors and shares her food.

Officially she has her bed in the ward. No one ever goes further into the matter, until one of those new-fangled people called a Matron comes to the hospital, who pokes her nose into everything. The splint room has to be put in order. The Matron may probably find a bedroom, but in all probability she will fail to get the ward maid to eat in the refectory. Two agents oppose her: the cook, who has been fifteen years in the hospital, refuses to make up special dishes for the ward maid; and the ward maid announces that on account of her gastric trouble she had not been able for the last ten years to eat the hospital cooking.

The Matron capitulates before two old servants, thankful to have got the splint room into her own hands.

In every French hospital where I have worked the same battle has had to be fought with almost the whole staff. When things have taken a more or less organised form, and a few new probationers are admitted for training, you hear them discussing the weakness of the Matron in letting Mère Gourdin take her food to her room. They probably don't know that Mère Gourdin up to a few

weeks ago hung her best dress in one of the cupboards in the visiting surgeon's office. And only a new cupboard being put at her disposal decided her to change her habits of at least ten years' standing.

That is at present one of our successes—and yet what a lot to be done still.

## REFLECTIONS

FROM A BOARD ROOM MIRROR.

Mr. Balfour has consented to open the new buildings at Guy's Hospital, which have taken some four years to complete, comprising the new laboratories of chemistry and physics, the new pathological department, and the new school of dentistry on June 3rd.

On Tuesday evening the Guy's Hospital Musical Society gave a most successful concert in the Physiological Theatre, transformed for the occasion into a concert hall. Nurse Drower gained great applause for her "Blackbird's Song." A violin orchestra, mostly composed of nurses, provided a pot-pourri of pretty airs; Mr. Clive Olive sang several popular songs, the Hon. Secretary (Miss Hinds) gave two delightful songs, and the part-singing was charming.

It has been suggested that a memorial to the late Mr. R. B. Etherington-Smith should take the form of providing and endowing separate sick quarters at St. Bartholomew's Hospital for the use of the medical, surgical, and resident staff, and of providing a suitable memorial at Cambridge.

Speaking at the annual meeting of the Metropolitan Hospital, Lord Howard de Walden said he sympathised with the need for a new Nurses' Home, "which had been in the air ever since he became chairman." The sooner his lordship whistles it down the wind and plants it on *terra firma* the better. The huge ground rents received from his London estate should make this a very easy matter.

Prince Arthur of Connaught has consented to become president of the West London Hospital at Hammersmith, in succession to the late Duke of Abercorn.

The committee of the Royal Infirmary, Manchester, are appealing for £25,000 to defray the cost of the Central Branch for accidents and out-patients now in course of erection on the site facing Piccadilly.

Dr. Sandwith, the Gresham Professor of Physics, will deliver four lectures on May 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th, on (1) "The Cradle of Pharmacy," (2) "Opium," (3) "Arsenic," and (4) "Mercury." The syllabus is most interesting and they are free to the public. They will be given in the City of London School, Victoria Embankment, at 6 p.m.

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