

excellent surgical nurse, a very good medical nurse, a splendid sister and a first-rate house-keeper, all in one. The nurse in the men's hospital spends her day in superintending the cook and the servants, training the staff of young Persian men, going round twice with the doctor, keeping accounts, superintending the washing woman, holding classes for the women who visit the patients, and sometimes visiting these women in their homes. Do not think that because of a lot of work missionaries are to be pitied; rather they are to be congratulated, for it is grand to fill a place that none else can fill.

On the evangelistic side, too, there is much to be done. Every day some 120 out-patients gather, including, it may be, robbers come red-handed from the deserts, Mohammedan priests, soldiers, Jews, Parsees. Many have never seen a Bible, and have never heard of Jesus Christ, except as an inferior prophet. To these the doctor will speak, and to them he will hold up the object lesson of what is being done for them and for their friends, *because* God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. What they want and can understand is a life that shows forth love; and many go out from the hospital changed in character. And, although to profess any other religion than Mohammedanism means persecution and probably death, not one year has passed during the past fifteen years without some men and women daring to come out and profess Christ. One story tells of the change in life. On his way home Dr. White met a young Englishman in the desert, who said to him, "I want to thank you for saving my life; I was captured by robbers, stripped and robbed, and taken to the hills where they consulted together about slaying me. But two of the robbers had been patients in your hospital: because of what they learned there, they persuaded the others to spare my life."

Only one thing is hampering the work—the fewness of the workers. The number of workers should be doubled, and those who go will never regret their choice.

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## CHILDREN IN WORKHOUSES.

### PROTEST TO MR. BURNS.

We have been invited to insert the following letter which has been forwarded to the President of the Local Government Board by the officers and the members of the executive and Parliamentary Committees of the State Children's Association, with which we heartily agree:—

Sir,—At the last meeting of the State Children's Association Executive Committee the Draft Poor Law Institutions Order, in so far as it affects children was considered.

While rejoicing that the order would make it impossible for boards of guardians to retain

children permanently in the workhouses, the committee deeply regret the proposal to fix the age until which children may be maintained in workhouses at five years.

They desire to enter their earnest protest against this proposal on the following grounds:—

1. Educationists assert that the years between three and five are of the utmost importance in the children's mental and moral development, for during that period under proper training formative habits of mind and body are acquired which largely determine the children's worth in after years.

2. During these highly impressionable years, therefore, it is essential that the children should have every reasonable opportunity of learning through educative play, through the handling of toys and articles suitable to their use, as well as by unconscious imitation of those surrounding them. In many workhouses these infants have insufficient toys or none at all. The officials charged with their oversight are unable to do more than attend to their physical needs, and not infrequently are assisted, even in this particular, by pauper women. The monotony and inactivity of their meaningless existence and the lack of open-air life are pernicious to these unfortunate children.

3. While in the past guardians have been in the habit of boarding out their children at an early age and of placing those of three years old in scattered homes—where their presence is both welcome and useful to the elder children—this proposal to make five years of age the limit up to which they may be retained amid workhouse surroundings will have the effect of making that age the minimum at which guardians will plan other methods of upbringing. Since the appearance of the draft order a board of guardians in the west has been recommended by its Children's Committee not to remove the children from the workhouse to the scattered homes until five years old, instead of at three as heretofore. We fear that this example may be widely followed, and that boards of guardians may think themselves justified in inferring that the Local Government Board has instigated this retrograde step.

4. At the age of three children frequently have to be removed from the workhouse nurseries, where their presence is detrimental to the infants of tenderer years. A change of surroundings being then necessary, it is a suitable time for the young life to be placed where it can, by attempt and experience, learn how to live well.

For these weighty reasons we ask, therefore, that the limit of children's maintenance in workhouses be fixed at three years old and not at five as suggested, the children's welfare being in our view—and we are sure also in the view of your Department—above any question of "administrative convenience."

We desire also to ask that the period allowed to guardians in which to make new arrangements for their children's upbringing should be fixed at 12 months instead of two years as suggested.

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