

It is only natural, therefore, that there is a state of general unrest. It is not due to the Royal British Nurses' Association, as some imagine; nor even to *The Nursing Record*, as others aver. The Association and this Journal are only effects—and very natural effects. The cause is the development of Nursing; and like all other natural growths this will take its course, and produce its due results, unchecked by any opposition. We earnestly commend this reflection to the consideration of the few Hospital managers who, mistaking the effect for the cause, are attempting to hinder the work of the Nurses' Association. They are striving to stem an irresistible wave of professional progress which is rolling round the world; which in America and the Anglo-Saxon countries is showing itself by efforts at self-help; which in France has led to the expulsion of the Sisters of Mercy from the Hotel Dieu; and in Germany and Denmark is evinced by appeals to the Government for legislative aid. We prefer our English method, and hope next week to point out the practical importance of this matter to every Trained Nurse.

#### LADY MEDICAL WORKHOUSE OFFICERS.

A DULY qualified and registered lady doctor has been appointed second Assistant Medical Officer at the Withington Workhouse Infirmary, and the appointment, we are told, has given general satisfaction. Should the appointment of ladies as Medical Officers to our Workhouse Infirmaries, however, become general, the need for a revision of the relative positions of Medical Superintendents and Matrons will become even more pressing than it is at present. For it is to be presumed that the lady in question will desire to obtain in due course the position of Medical Superintendent, and when such time arrives will *she* be expected to double her part as skilfully as these gentlemen are at present required to do? Will she be called upon to engage Nurses and Scullerymaids; to supervise the Matron's domestic arrangements, the steward's stores, and the kitchen management; to be learned on the subject of soda and soap in the laundry; to be responsible for the cleanliness and economy of the Infirmary in every detail; and, finally—in her leisure moments—to cast a glance at the five or six hundred patients entrusted to her medical skill? Let us hope not. Let us hope that, in that distant future, Local Government Board laws will have become practical, and Boards of Guardians enlightened—that they will then expect the scientific man or woman to employ his or her time with the medical treatment of the pauper sick, leaving the no less useful and necessary task of the supervision of domestic details, and the secretarial work, to other persons, who shall be directly responsible for the proper performance of duties lying outside medical diagnosis, prognosis and treatment. The late

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scandals have shown, only too clearly, the weakness and faultiness of the present system. It says much for the ability and discretion of most Medical Superintendents, and for the tact of most Infirmary Matrons, that so complicated a machinery has hitherto worked with so little public discord. But if the Medical Superintendent of the future is to be a woman, we foresee very clearly that there will be heart-burnings indeed between her and her fellow-worker—the Matron—unless their positions are more clearly defined and limited than they are at present.

#### THE GLASGOW ROYAL INFIRMARY.

IF the state of things described in a letter from a Probationer of the Glasgow Royal Infirmary to a Northern contemporary is truly depicted, the management of the "oldest, richest, and most popular institution of its kind in the kingdom" has little reason to be proud of its arrangements for the comfort and welfare of its Nursing Staff. Sixteen hours a day on duty, insufficient food, even the night's rest liable to be broken at any moment, is a record the newest and poorest Hospital might be ashamed of. It remains to be seen how the "oldest and richest" Hospital in Scotland will meet the charge. It has been explained to the public often enough that a signalman is absolutely incapable of being responsible for the proper working of his signals after being at his post for sixteen hours; and it is difficult to understand how a Nurse is supposed to be able to take the responsibility of the sick and the dying after spending twenty-nine hours out of thirty-one and a-half on duty. There is in some quarters a great outcry against the combination of women engaged in Nursing to protect themselves. We hear so much of the open-handed generosity with which governors and committees, of their own free will, provide for the well-being of Nurses and Probationers, that it is sometimes good to call attention to the seamy under-surface. Without doubt the ordinary Glasgow Committeeman fancies a working day of from fourteen to sixteen hours a very fair average day's work for a young woman, and would consider the introduction of more Nurses to lighten the work and shorten the hours as a useless extravagance; but the "Charity" that sweats its subordinates to be able to show a low average price per bed to its subscribers should certainly head its subscription list with the names of those Nurses through whose overwork the Committee has gained the reputation of economical management. But have the Glasgow people realised the cruelty of this sort of economy? It must mean needless wear and tear in the health and strength of their Nurses. It must mean that the poor in the Royal Infirmary do not receive the care they should receive. Nursing matters are notoriously behind the age in Glasgow—with the notable exception of the Children's Hospital—but we hope these revelations will arouse public attention, and bring about reform.

NOTE.—We much regret that the great pressure upon our space this week compels us to hold over the "Letter from Life" until our next issue.—ED.

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[previous page](#)

[next page](#)