

innocent of what a Nurse's duties are, and of what varied amount of care, patients with various complaints require. This also explains what appears to be a common custom in such establishments—the absence of any regular night Nurses—and the extraordinary habit, in special cases, of making the day Nurse sleep in the patient's room, and considering her, therefore, for ever "on duty." The dangers of this system, for the sick, are manifest, and where male patients are concerned, the indelicacy for the Nurse has been justly condemned.

All these, and many other evils, each of which urgently requires reform, arise from the one cardinal absurdity of Nursing Homes being controlled by persons ignorant of Nursing. We call the earnest attention of our medical readers to the matter, because we feel confident that this is all that is needed, so far as they are concerned. It is quite clear to us that the public mind is being aroused on the question, and that if medical men would also take a decided stand, such Homes as those of which we have written, would speedily assume their proper position as ordinary lodging-houses.

HOSPITAL BAKSHEESH.

THERE is a growing custom in Hospitals to which a limit must be placed. Travellers in Egypt are aware of the nuisance of the incessant demand for "baksheesh," which seeks to translate the simplest service into current coin of the realm. There is grave reason to fear that this principle, in another form, is becoming widely diffused in Hospital life. Fifteen years ago, when most Nurses belonged to the domestic-servant class, no one expected them to subscribe for presents to this, that, or the other official. At present, when most are drawn from a higher social scale, the expenses of a Probationer are enormously increased, and she is expected to give to all sorts of objects. She is asked to subscribe to Ward decorations, and to assist poverty-stricken patients when discharged, as a matter of course; but the heaviest tax of all is undoubtedly the presentation of testimonials to departing officials, or to the permanent officers at various times and seasons. We are glad to know that in many Hospitals the authorities strongly discountenance the imposition of this tax upon women, many of whom are quite unable to afford it. We are well aware that sometimes it gives the keenest pleasure to every worker to subscribe towards a general present to some honoured official who is leaving their midst, but it is the constant demand for such subscriptions upon any, and every, frivolous pretext, against which we feel bound to protest most strongly. And it is a curious fact, although an easily explicable one, that the habit prevails to the greatest extent in those Hospitals in which the Committees have placed the Nurses in the absolute power

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of one official. Someone is constantly discovering an auspicious occasion for presenting that official with a proof of someone's ardent admiration, by starting a subscription list for a new present, and as it is generally made clear that the official in question will know who has, or who has not subscribed, no Nurse who values her comfort or peace of mind dare refuse many such demands upon her purse, however empty it may be. The least, therefore, that the Committees of such Hospitals can do is to prohibit the presentation of this incessant frankincense and myrrh to officials whom they have made omnipotent.

NURSES' WASHING.

SEVERAL correspondents have called our attention to the large expenditure of Probationers and Nurses for uniform washing, and we have carefully investigated the subject. It is essential, upon the one hand, to the safety of the patients that their Nurses should always be absolutely clean; but, on the other hand, a good many Probationers have but little private means, and the salary they receive is, as a rule, too meagre to enable them to pay heavy washing bills. We have had various estimates submitted to us, ranging from £5 15s. a year to £10, as the necessary amount of this expenditure, and we imagine that £8 per annum represents by no means an extravagant outlay. But, considering that many Hospitals only pay their Probationers £12 in their first year, and only £16 in the second, it is abundantly plain, either that washing should also be provided, or that the Institution has no right to require a Probationer to wear a uniform which must be clean if its wearer is not to convey disease rather than health in her ministrations. To underpay such a worker is merely to put a premium upon dirt, and to immediately neutralise all the expensive antiseptic appliances employed in that Hospital. As a matter of sheer economy, therefore, as well as upon the ground of justice to the Nurses, we call upon all Hospital Committees to provide liberally for the uniform washing, at least, of their Nursing Staff.

DISCIPLINE.

THE facts revealed at an inquest, held last week, upon a man who died in a Workhouse Infirmary, point a moral of the highest importance to all Nurses. The patient had apparently not been expected to die. He fell out of bed, and it appears the Nurse left him there and went for the Superintendent, who, it seems, decided that there was no need to call the Medical Superintendent, as the man died at once. A juror pointed out that there were bruises on the man's head, and there was a general feeling expressed that the Doctor should have been summoned immediately. There can be no doubt on that point, and we would once more point out, as we have often said before, that while no Nurse will shirk responsibility which is properly hers, no one should assume responsibility which does not belong to her department. The Nurse is the Doctor's assistant, and the more clearly she recognises the position, and fulfils its duties, the more useful and the more respected will she be.

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