

feel surprised: "Notwithstanding an increase of nine in the number of the Sisters and Nurses, the cost of their board has been reduced during the year from £1,748 to £1,661." Let us realise what this means. We are within the mark in estimating the cost of a Nurse's board at nine shillings per week. The board of nine Nurses, therefore, for a year would represent at least £210. This, added to the saving boasted of, shows a sum of about £300, or a reduction of more than one-sixth on the previous rate of expenditure. The comment is obvious. Either there had been the most extraordinary extravagance previously, or so large a reduction must have meant that the Nurses were insufficiently fed in 1889. On neither aspect can we congratulate the Committee of King's College Hospital.

We pass on, however, to 1890, and the Report for that year once more tells a tale which he who runs can read. It will be remembered that during this year there was taking place the momentous inquiry by the Select Committee of the House of Lords. While that inquiry was proceeding, the Committee of King's College hurriedly set their house in order—they adopted a revised list of Rules for the Sisters and Nurses which they (p. 6) admit "will materially relax the strain upon their strength at a moderate additional cost to the Hospital. The average daily hours of a Nurse's duty will, under these Rules, be reduced from eleven and a-half to nine and three-quarters, and she will thus have a liberal amount of daily relaxation." We were aware at the time of the circumstances under which the Sister-Matron obtained this greatly-needed revision of the Rules. It was one of the many facts which encouraged us to persevere single-handed in our *exposé* of the scandals at the London Hospital. *En passant*, we may note that in this year the Committee arranged to pay half the premiums of Nurses on their regular Staff who desired to join the Royal National Pension Fund. Last year they thus disbursed no less a sum than £7 os. 9d. on this account—sufficient, we presume, to assist two of their Nurses to obtain £15 a year on reaching the age of fifty-five!! We hardly know whether to admire most the lavish generosity of the Committee, or the wisdom of the King's College Nurses, which this little item reveals.

We have nothing but praise for the Committee, however, in their recognition of the signs of the times, and the hasty reforms they therefore made in 1890. How necessary the reforms were, let

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the words of the Report for last year, tell: "The Committee feel sure that they will be felt to have done no more than their duty in affording the Nurses some relief from the increased strain imposed upon them by the requirements of their work, in accordance with modern science. The result has been seen in a marked diminution of illness among the Nursing Staff during the year, and in increased vigour and efficiency. The strain of a year of exceptional work has been borne with less failure of health than has often been seen in ordinary years; and though the Committee have had to lament some sad cases of illness, and one of death, the general condition of the Nursing Staff is, in spite of the recent epidemic of influenza, very satisfactory."

What a wonderful contrast these words are, to those employed in earlier years, where the health of the Nurses is not mentioned, and where indeed they are only named in fond anticipation of the large sums which may be sweated out of their labour. These words are typical of the change of feeling which has taken place in a hundred Hospitals, and for which we can confidently claim some share of credit. For we have urged, and when necessity arises, will urge again in no uncertain words, that Nurses are human beings—not cast-iron machines to be overworked until they break down, at the careless will of Hospital Committees. But what admissions the Committee make—"the increased strain," "the marked diminution of illness," the "increased vigour and efficiency." They have tried at last to do their duty, in this respect, to their Nurses, so we will not pursue this subject further. But we commend their experience to the Committees of other Hospitals, at which the old cruel system of overwork is still continued.

Now we come to the finances of the Nursing Department, which require considerable explanation. Let us, to make our meaning clear, show the receipts of the Nursing Department as given in the Reports:—

	Payments by Special Probationers.	Fees for Private Nurses.
1888	£468 13s. 6d.	£323 10s. 0d.
1889	£460 2s. 0d.	£453 1s. 6d.
1890	£401 0s. 0d.	£943 0s. 0d.
1891	£291 2s. 0d.	£57 13s. 0d.

It will immediately be observed how, year after year, the number of Special Probationers appear to have steadily decreased—a fact, to our mind, not without probable compensation to the sick poor—and which we imagine to mean that fewer short-term Probationers are now admitted than was formerly the case. But the figures in the second column are most surprising. The Report

De Jong's Cocoa.—Dr. Hehner (President of the Society of Public Analysts) says: "Of absolute purity and highest excellence; surpasses in delicacy of aroma and richness of taste the best kinds hitherto offered to the public."

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