

matter of fact, the attendance of nurses at operations is left to the matron to direct and arrange, and the House Surgeon does not directly concern himself with it, provided that efficient assistance is available. The matron has excused probationers from attending on the one or two occasions when they have requested it. But undoubtedly it is part of the modern system of scientific nursing that those who are in training for that calling should accustom themselves to attend operations of all sorts, without for a moment permitting themselves to imagine that there can be anything impure or indelicate in any method by which scientific knowledge and skill are employed in the relief of suffering. The probationers at the Christchurch Hospital, one and all, I believe, regard their work in this light, and enter upon it in this spirit. In the one or two instances in which any of them have felt some reluctance to attend the class of operations referred to, it is clear that this reluctance arose, not from the spontaneous action of their own minds, but from indelicate and improper suggestions coming from another quarter. I refer to remarks made by Mr. Richard Brown, the chief wardsman, who, brought up in an older school and unaccustomed to the scientific spirit of more modern methods, may have felt honestly, though unreasonably, shocked by a system which contravened his prejudices. At all events, he permitted himself to indulge in remarks to or at the probationers attending the operations which could not fail to be offensive to them, and were certainly very unbecoming on his part. A young nurse, endeavouring, without a thought of anything wrong, to learn her profession by rendering help at an operation, could hardly help feeling her position unpleasant when told by an elderly and experienced man that she "might make a nurse, but never a woman"; but it is not the nurse who ought to be ashamed of the remark. But remarks of this kind appear to have been the only cause (with the single exception that some nurses objected to the presence of the *masseur* at operations) of any difficulty arising from the attendance of probationers in the operating theatre. I have no hesitation, therefore, in dismissing the allegations under this head as destitute of any foundation in fact, as well as of any excuse that might arise from the ignorance of an unprofessional accuser, and I see no reason whatever for finding fault with the present system under which the attendance of nurses and probationers at operations is left to the matron. Under this system an office known as that of "theatre nurse" is held in rotation for a certain time by one person, whose business it is to see that the theatre and necessary appliances are got ready for the operation. The "sister" of the ward always attends, and one or more probationers, taken in rotation from the different wards, are also present for the purpose both of helping and of learning. The matron also is there, as a rule, to direct the order and disposition of the nursing staff, and to assign suitable duties to each, in doing which she would doubtless consider the age, capacity, and experience of each probationer, as well as the character of the operation, having regard also to the possible sensitiveness of the patient prior to the administration of the anæsthetic. All this is matter for her discretion, and no good can come from the attempt to interfere with the control exercised by a lady who may fairly be credited with as genuine a concern for the moral delicacy of the young women under her charge as the writers of anonymous letters and their unseen prompters.

2. "Is it true that the House Surgeon issued an order that all patients must attend the Church of England services on Sundays, otherwise they would be punished by having their passes to visit their friends outside stopped?"

This is put in the form of an assertion in one of the other papers, and in the third it is more general, alleging that "The House Surgeon issues orders needlessly harassing to patients, and is generally arbitrary in his manner towards them."

The fact, under this head, is that the House Surgeon did instruct the nurses to notify to the patients that those of them, except Roman Catholics (and perhaps other denominations), would have their passes stopped if, being able, they did not attend the morning service on Sundays. And on one occasion he did actually tear up the pass of a patient for this cause. The doctor and matron seem to have thought it did not look seemly for patients to be idling about the corridors when the clergyman who gave his services to the Hospital could not get a congregation. The matron, on one occasion, wrote a memorandum on the back of an envelope for the information of the nurses in one of the wards, and this so-called order was stuck up by them in the ward kitchen. But the thing seems never to have been systematically insisted on, no steps being usually taken except to tell the patients where and when the religious service is to take place. I do not think the practice of using any kind of pressure to induce the patients to attend a religious service can be justified. The cases of some English hospitals which have been quoted are not, I think, in point, since they, being supported by voluntary contributions, can frame their own rules, to which patients must conform or go out. But a hospital supported by the public purse is on quite a different footing, and no rules ought to be enforced but those necessary for the efficient working of the institution considered as a hospital. I do not, however, think it at all likely that complaint on this head will again be made in connection with the Christchurch Hospital.

3. "Is it true that no applicant has a chance of being placed on the nursing staff unless she belongs to the Church of England?"

The affirmative of this question is asserted in the other papers, one of which alleges that applicants have been refused on account of their religion. The evidence, however, shows that these statements are untrue, no question about religion being asked of probationers.

4. "Is it true, as a matter of fact, that all the recently-appointed probationers belong to the above denomination?"

This is not true, but the great majority belong to it. How far this may be accounted for by the preponderance of that communion in Christchurch I cannot say. The only case in which a suggestion of unfairness has been specifically made in evidence is that of Probationer Maclaren. Her examination papers have been put in, together with those of some other candidates, for the purpose of comparison. Certainly the imputation of unfairness has not been proved.

5. "Is it true that probationers have been appointed without the knowledge or consent of the house committee, in whose hands, according to the rules, all such appointments rest?"

This appears as No. 4 in the other papers, where the affirmative has been alleged.