

No such appointments have been made. Those candidates who, after three months' trial, are considered qualified to be placed on the nursing staff are, if there are vacancies for them, appointed probationers in the manner provided in by-laws 123 and 126. But if there is no vacancy the candidates so qualified may, if they are willing, be taken on by the matron as honorary probationers, receiving no pay, but waiting for a vacancy, and meanwhile learning their profession. For this practice the matron has a general authority.

6. "Is it true that no Irish need apply as probationers?"

"Tongariro" is the only one who has ventured on this suggestion. The answer to the question is that it is not true.

7. "Is it true that the House Doctor orders patients to be put on bread and water if they offend against what he considers the order of the wards?"

To this question—which stands as an assertion under No. 5 in the other papers—a note is appended to the effect that "The governor of the gaol dares not put the biggest villain under his care on bread and water without the permission of the Visiting Justices." It might have occurred to the writer that the reason why strict rules are necessary to prevent abuse of power in a prison is that the inmates of that institution are not at liberty to walk out whenever they may feel dissatisfied with their treatment.

It appears that the House Surgeon has ordered patients on four different occasions to be put on bread and water. Two of these aggrieved persons were small boys, to whom the Hospital authorities might be regarded for the time being as *in loco parentis*. The other two were men, one of whom was a prisoner from Lyttelton Gaol, and who, from that circumstance, might easily give more trouble than other patients, since he could not be readily expelled. It seems that these orders were not carried out, nor indeed intended to be, if only the persons concerned would conduct themselves properly, and, as a matter of fact, pudding appears to have found its way to them. The action of the doctor was unauthorised by any express rule, but since by-law No. 2, section 26, apparently gives the House Surgeon the power of summary dismissal in cases of insubordination, it would seem that the minor alternative adopted could scarcely be regarded as a serious grievance. It is true that this could not be considered as an alternative in the case of the patient sent from the prison, but it is difficult to see what better means could be adopted of keeping him in order.

9. "Is it true that many complaints are made as to the cooking of the patients' food?"

10. "Is it true that the only time nurses get beef is when it is served up after having first done duty at the doctor's table?"

This in one of the other papers, Nos. 15 and 16, has the further allegation that "the steward has failed to exercise proper supervision over the food-supply of the Hospital." In the remaining one it stands as Nos. 6 and 7, which contain the substance of Nos. 9 and 10 above quoted from "Tongariro."

Upon this subject of bad food, or bad cooking, or both, a great deal of evidence has been given, the general sum and substance of which may be shortly stated. The food and cooking are said by some to be satisfactory, and even excellent, whilst by a larger number much complaint has been made of both food and cooking, the quality of which during some years past is called in question. It is said that the fish has been frequently bad, that the meat has been ill-cooked, the puddings and soup containing more water than anything else, that the supply of eggs and vegetables was too scanty, and that at one time no beef appeared for weeks. In thus summarising the complaints I do not distinguish between those that affect the nurses' or the patients' tables respectively. It is enough for me to say that, after making all allowance for the propensity of human nature to grumble at its food—particularly when this is supplied gratuitously—it seems pretty clear that the food department has not yet become quite what it ought to be. The complaints of bad fish appear to have been remedied by changing the contractor, and the watery character of some dishes is explained by leakage into them from the steam-pipes, a circumstance more satisfactory to the inquirer than to the consumer. Other defects in the kitchen apparatus account for occasional bad cooking. The supply and consumption of eggs have been shown to be very large, and when chicken could not be obtained rabbit has been got to supply its place, which, however, has unfortunately been regarded as a grievance by some of those concerned. The occasional defect of beef has not been quite explained, but, with regard to the complaint that when the nurses got any it came from the doctor's table, it appears that his own partiality for that dish in a cold condition would prevent any extreme abuse in that direction. With regard to the food question generally, it seems to have been felt that not much could be done in the way of reform until the new Nurses' Home should be finished. Whether that be a sufficient excuse or not for all the shortcomings I can hardly say, but it does appear that whilst complaints to the Board and to the present matron, as well as her predecessor, were always attended to, and were followed by some alleviation of what was wrong, yet no permanent effect was produced. But now that the Nurses' Home is in working-order the matter is being taken in hand, and the Board is about to institute a thorough scheme of renovation and improvement in the kitchen and cooking appliances. It is alleged that the steward has not exercised proper supervision over the food-supply of the Hospital. It seems to be true that he has practically limited his duties under by-law No. 2 to the inspection of dry goods and groceries, although sections 50 and 51 point to the extension of these duties to all classes of provisions. He might, by a strict compliance with section 46, have sometimes prevented questionable fish from coming in, but the faults in cooking would have remained. It is to be hoped that the improvements to be now introduced will have the effect of removing all reasonable grounds of complaint about the quality and preparation of the food.

In connection with this subject, it seems appropriate to notice the objectionable arrangement of the hours for meals which now exists. The tea-hour is far too early for persons not in robust health, when no further refreshment is obtainable until breakfast time the next morning. It ought to be enough to mention this to secure attention to the point and some alteration of the practice.

11. "Is it true that the House Doctor formulated a charge against the nurses, and laid it in