

It is to be hoped that a copy of the correspondence will be forwarded by the nurses to the Local Government Board, asking that a full inquiry may be instituted by the Board into the manner in which the guardians have acted in the matter. It is reported that the colleague the accused nurses suspect of having given private information about them to the committee has been accused of using most reprehensible language in the wards to the poor patients, calling them "pauper wretches," "dirty filthy wretches," and so forth, and that, upon inquiry, the patients have substantiated the accusation. It throws a sad side-light upon the benighted condition of some of our Poor Law Infirmaries. We are not surprised that the Committee of the Workhouse Infirmary Nursing Association has felt compelled to urge upon the Local Government Board that the whole question of Poor Law Nursing should be undertaken by a State Department, or should be the subject of a Departmental inquiry.

Appointments.

MRS. OKELL has been appointed Superintendent of Nursing at the West Ham Infirmary, which contains some seven hundred beds, and will begin her new work early in the New Year. Mrs. Okell was trained at St. Bartholomew's Hospital from 1883-86, and gained experience in Poor Law administration as Assistant Matron at St. Saviour's Infirmary, Dulwich, from 1887-90, since when she has been matron of the Bridgwater Infirmary. Mrs. Okell is a member of the Royal British Nurses' Association and a Registered Nurse, and has on every occasion courageously supported the principles upon which the Association was founded. We congratulate the West Ham Board of Guardians on obtaining the services of a lady inspired, as Mrs. Okell is, with untiring devotion to the welfare of the sick, and with a keen sense of professional responsibility.

MISS CLARA ANN CURD has been appointed Superintendent Nurse at the Lewisham Union Workhouse. She was trained at the Croydon Infirmary, and has recently held the position of Head Nurse at the Union Workhouse, Basingstoke.

Examinations.

THE examination of Probationary Nurses has lately taken place at the Kidderminster Infirmary, and amply proved the intelligent interest taken by those nurses who have just completed the curriculum of three years' training in the theory and practice of their work. Miss Godmond obtained the highest number of marks, and was therefore the winner of the President's Prize of books. The teaching given in this school is very thorough, the subjects being divided into three sections, Anatomy and Physiology, The Nursing of Medical and Surgical Diseases, and Practical Nursing.

District Nursing.

BY A MEMBER OF THE ST. JOHN'S HOUSE
DEBATING SOCIETY.

(Read before a Meeting of the Society, October 14th, 1897.)

JUDGING from my own experience, it appears an error to suppose that nurses do not require such thorough training for district as private work, and when I see in advertisements that twelve months' training is considered sufficient for district nurses, the conclusion is forced upon me that either their patients are more intelligent than those it is my province to nurse, or I was unusually dull when I was training. Certainly, the serious surgical operations, such as tracheotomy, ovariectomy, etc., are done in hospital, but, on the other hand, the visits of parish doctors are often few and far between—they necessarily have a great deal of work to do, and if they find the nurse at all apt, they are not loth to use her services, so that she often has to rely on her own resources and judgment to a greater extent than is required in private work. It is necessary, therefore, that she should be well grounded in obstetrical work, in dressing wounds, and bandaging. Antiseptics are but little used in district work, but she should aim at being aseptic, and must understand the principles on which asepticism is founded. She must be quick at expedients, and should also have some knowledge of dispensing, as if she is able to dispense simple drugs this will keep down expenses considerably. It is a very great boon to have a home of one's own to go to when work is practically over for the day, where one can get a whiff of wholesome country air, after the hours spent in stuffy courts, and the close atmosphere of single tenements. District nursing must be more healthy than hospital or private work, and it affords plenty of variety. The majority of poor folk mean well, and follow your advice in a patronising way if it suits their own ideas, but they are ultra conservative, and if you leave instructions for anything to which they are unaccustomed to be done, you will rarely find them carried out, the reason given on your next visit being, because the mother or grandmother did not do so.

If the family court charity, cleanliness and tidiness are carefully avoided. You constantly hear that the sheets have gone to be washed, and it is too wet to get them dried. Should you go in six weeks' time to the same house you hear the same excuse.

My own personal experience has been that medical men have been most kind and attentive whenever I have asked for their support in any difficulty. The district visitors also have been most considerate. The poor are grateful for any act of kindness, and it not unfrequently happens

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)