

were the most suitable class, and that an ordinary fifth-standard education was quite sufficient. Dr. Griffiths thought there would in future be two classes of midwives—one highly trained for the towns, and the lesser trained for the country districts.

The question of the supply of midwives is a very difficult one, but in our opinion it will never be solved by the adoption of a low standard, but by the agency of a national society like the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses, which might eventually send thoroughly trained women into every parish in the kingdom. It is in this way that we must hope for an efficient supply, not by entrusting women with an insufficient general and professional education with the responsible duties of a midwife. Such women might combine the office of midwife with that of public instructor in the laws of health, and the care of infants and young children. There would be ample scope for such work. In the country districts surely a more, not a less, efficient class of midwives should be employed than in the towns, as medical assistance is so much more difficult to obtain in emergencies. In conclusion, if midwives are attached to nursing associations it should be a *sine qua non* that they are also trained nurses.

We are glad that our criticisms of the management of the finances of the Royal National Pension Fund have had the effect of obtaining better terms for the policy-holders. Henceforth the Council of the Fund has decided that policy-holders who withdraw from the Fund after their policies have been in force seven full years will pay no administrative cost, but will receive their total payment with 2½ per cent. compound interest.

It is satisfactory that one after another the General and County Hospitals are coming into line as to the three years' minimum standard of training. We are glad to learn that the West Suffolk Hospital, Bury St. Edmunds, has lately decided to require all its probationers to pass through this term. Until recently they have been allowed to enter for either a two or a three years' course. The adoption of the three years' term of training by almost every general hospital of repute should ensure the adoption of this standard under any Registration Act. At the same time we must not forget that side by side with an approximate uniformity of standard in the training-schools there is a real danger in the inadequacy of the education required by many county nursing associations, and other societies run by lay committees with little conception of what is required of trained nurses. The sooner, therefore, that a minimum standard is laid down and enforced by a professional authority the better in the interests of the sick.

Mr. Stevens, Local Government Board Inspector, at a meeting of the Eton Guardians last week, severely censured the condition of the infirmary and of the patients in the Slough Workhouse. Mr. Stevens said that he and Dr. Fuller found the wards unclean, the patients dirty, and in some cases neglected. In one instance, a helpless patient was said by the nurse to have a small abrasion, but on inspection was found to have a large bed-sore on the buttock, which had not been attended to, nor was there any appliance to prevent the sore getting worse. Other patients were also afflicted with bed-sores, and in one of the wards fleas were observed. The medical officer stated that there were not sufficient nurses, as since the South African war there had been so many more tramps. The whole circumstances certainly call for thorough investigation by the Special Committee which has been appointed to consider the matter.

Is it within the right of a Superintendent Nurse to move patients from one ward to another? The Superintendent Nurse at the Christ Church Union has apparently been accused of removing an aged inmate to another ward as a punishment. She says that, on the contrary, the patient was removed because she considers it beneficial to change the surroundings of patients who have been in one ward for several years. In our view this is a point which should be decided by the medical officer.

At a meeting of the Lewes Board of Guardians a letter was received from the Superintendent Nurse at the Infirmary with reference to the discussion at the last meeting, on a letter from the Local Government Board, as to her age; and offering to produce a birth certificate to prove that she had not obtained her present position "under a fictitious age." When making her application for a post at Dulwich she was, she said, advised to add two years to her age in order to obtain the appointment. The Clerk observed that he had heard the nurse had been "very absent-minded with regard to her age."

Some extraordinary allegations were made against a London Nursing Home at an inquest held at Westbury touching the death of a one-month-old child whose mother was confined in the Home on Christmas Day. The mother alleged that she was starved, and that she was unable to nurse the child; that she told the nurse so, but that no action was taken. Other inmates had to buy milk with their own money. She further alleged that she was sent out of the Home last week alone, although her sister had written to say she was coming for her. On arrival at Westbury she fainted, and next morning her child died. The jury, in returning a verdict that the child died from debility and inanition, censured the authorities of the Home for sending the mother away alone

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