

THE
BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING
WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD
EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,345

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 1914.

Vol. LII.

EDITORIAL.

**THE NEW POOR LAW INSTITUTIONS
(NURSING) ORDER 1913.**

The new Poor Law Institutions Order, and the Poor Law Institutions (Nursing) Order, promulgated by the President of the Local Government Board, on December 30th, 1913 (the latter document superseding the Nursing in Workhouses Order, 1897, now rescinded), are disappointing, as, although the circular issued with Orders states that the suggestions which were received in relation to the draft Orders have been carefully examined, and various alterations have been made in the drafts originally recommended, so far as the Nursing Order is concerned there appears to be little alteration. We print the Order in full on page 33.

We must except two points (1) that owing to the recommendations made, the Board have decided to require, in addition to a three years' certificate of general training, the qualification of certified midwife in the case of Head Nurses as well as of Superintendent Nurses. This is a distinct gain, as otherwise the lying-in cases in the majority of smaller institutions would be left without any resident official competent to render skilled help.

(2) Article 4 (2) provides that "a person shall not be appointed to the office of Nurse, or be permitted to perform nursing duties unless he or she has had such training in nursing as may render him or her a fit and proper person to hold such office or perform such duties."

In the draft Order the words "and experience" were included after "such training," these have now been deleted.

But, it will be observed that the training required in the case of those holding the position of nurse in the small Unions is left

absolutely undefined and vague, and the Order is silent as to *who* is to be the judge of what constitutes a "fit and proper person" to undertake the duties of nurse.

Another serious blot in the Order is that while no child over three may remain in a workhouse, no provision is made for the separated care of sick children, who are at present, even in large institutions frequently nursed in adult wards even when they have infectious maladies such as chickenpox and whooping cough. Generally they are put into the infirm wards with bedridden old people, sometimes into acute medical and surgical wards, greatly to the discomfort of those who are very ill, and who may be disturbed and kept awake. Very greatly also to the physical and moral detriment of the children.

Although the circular issued with the Orders states that "the position of the Superintendent Nurse is made more responsible, she will in future be required to perform in the sick wards the duties which would otherwise be performed by the Matron, and she will be required to make reports on matters affecting her duties" this is not apparent in the Order itself. The position of the Superintendent Nurse remains quite anomalous, and the control of the linen, always a frequent source of friction, still remains with the Matron, who is also distinctly given the control of the female officers, the younger boys, the infants and the sick in Article 60 of the Poor Law Institutions Order. It may be that the Proviso to this Article, referring to the Superintendent Nurse is intended to supersede it, but, if so, it is ambiguous.

A new departure contemplated is that arrangements shall be made with "District Nursing Associations who can supply properly qualified nurses when called upon to

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