

branches of Nursing the one in which it is most essential that the work should be performed by gentlewomen, is District Nursing. Leaflet of the Association, No. 2 embodies the following:—

"Rules and suggestions for forming branches of the Dorset Health Association in towns and villages in Dorchester:—One of the chief objects of the Dorset Health Association is to promote and assist in forming local benefit nursing clubs, and in providing suitable Nurses for carrying on the work in towns and villages. The association works entirely on the benefit system, viz.—That all who join the branch as benefit members, and pay yearly subscriptions, have the services of the Nurse at a much reduced rate. The funds for maintenance of the Nurse are provided in three ways:—By yearly subscriptions, and reduced fees of benefit members; by full fees from non-subscribers; by voluntary subscriptions, or grants where, in the case of a poor parish, the former are insufficient to maintain a Nurse. The Nurse's services are available to all classes of the community; both subscriptions being regulated according to a sliding scale, at the discretion of the Local Committee. Subscribers' tickets are usually as follows, yearly:—Labourers, 2s.; artisans and small tradespeople, 3s.; farmers and tradespeople, 5s.; those in better circumstances, 10s. (The fees paid during actual illness must be regulated by the size of the branch and the number of subscribers, varying from 2d. to 6d. per hour, and from 9d. to 1s. 2d. a day.) In villages, remote from towns, the Association recommends the employment of cottage Nurses, *i.e.*, local Nurses, drawn from the labouring and artisan classes, who may be considered by the Medical Committee sufficiently trained to carry on the nursing in case of ordinary illness or accident, and requiring proportionate wages. In towns a Nurse more completely educated and receiving wages—say from £30 to £35 a year, with board and lodgings—is required to act as district Nurse, with cottage Nurse, or Probationers, assisting her, and being trained by her. A district Association consists of a town centre, having surrounding villages, or groups of villages, affiliated to it as branches. District branches can be formed by any village, or group of villages, where no town centre exists. Each centre and each branch elects its own committee, engages its own Nurse, frames its own rules and manages its own funds, subject to the general principles of the Dorset Health Association, viz.—That it shall adopt some form of the benefit system; that it shall be governed by a committee; that its Nurse, or Nurses, shall be approved of by the Central Medical Committee.

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Lady Barker, the Hon Sec., then gave an interesting account of the progress of the work during the past year. At Blandford, public meetings have been held, a general and Nursing committee formed, a centre started, and a Nurse from the St. John's Home, Norfolk Street, is now in full work. The kind offer of Lord Portman to place the former Industrial Home at the disposal of the club at a nominal rent has been accepted, and a central training home for cottage Nurses will shortly be fully established there. At Shaftesbury, a centre has also been formed. A Nursing club is in full working order, a Nurse engaged, and members joining rapidly. Nursing clubs have also been started at Sherborne, Crichel, and Childe Okeford on somewhat similar lines, though the exact conditions of their affiliation to the Dorset Health Association have not yet been determined, as two of them will have Jubilee Nurses. Other Nursing clubs are contemplated at Sturminster, Shroton, Parkstone, Wimborne, and Wyke Regis. Several Dorset scholars are being trained; others are in prospect, so that by the end of the year it is probable that Dorset will boast of ten more Nurses than

she had last year. Should the yearly progress continue at this rate there is every hope that in time the county will be efficiently nursed, and a gradually increasing network of district and cottage Nurses all working under a harmonious scheme take the place of the present disjointed system."

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ASKED how the Probationers for training were selected, Lady BAKER replied as follows:—

"First, I make a searching preliminary examination as candidates crop up, as to their previous character, an examination as searching as that which I should make in a person whom I was going to take into my service. If satisfied with my investigations as to character, I pass the candidates on to the Medical Committee, who, if they find them suitable, recommend them for scholarships. Women are not too anxious to be trained as Nurses. Indeed, a good many whom I have offered it to, would not take it as a gift. However, I have seven promising ones, and a number who were found to be unsuitable. I would not have a woman under 25. Over that age they are both steadier and stronger."

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WE may congratulate the Nursing profession upon the standard of examination adopted, and we venture to think, considering the fact that every Nursing school of good repute is overpowered with applications for admission from women who desire to be thoroughly trained as Nurses, it is the system of inefficient training for a few months, prescribed by these rural Nursing societies, to which conscientious women object, and not to the nursing of the sick.

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THE sensible remark, made by the Rev. E. W. GOODDEN, that £25 per annum would not cover the expenses of a Nurse, is not open to dispute. The fact is that the question of the training and remuneration of these cottage workers is a very serious one, as both are quite inadequate to maintain a high standard of knowledge and efficiency. What Matron has not received many such letters as the following:—

"MADAM,—Knowing the interest you take in Nursing matters, I venture to write and ask you if you can recommend us a good trained Nurse for a country district. We want a woman of the highest moral character, well educated and agreeable in manner, as she will have to be conciliatory with the Committee, which is composed of somewhat divers elements, and we should like her to take an active interest in parish work. Several villages, comprising an area of about seven miles, would be included in her charge, and she would be expected to lodge in the centre village, and make rounds according to what illness might require attention; we wish for a staunch Church-woman. The wages are £35, coals and a room in a farmhouse; washing and food are cheap, and the Nurse gets many presents in the way of eatables—apples, pork-pies, potatoes, rabbits, etc. In wet weather a ride can often be got in the farmers' gig; we have also a carriers' cart."

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OUR reply to this letter was a short financial statement, in which we proved that clothes, food, washing, and lights could not be procured at the price, to say nothing of *labour*, and impressing upon our correspondent the necessity of giving a salary of at least £40, with everything found.

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