

The District Nurses of the Biblewoman's Mission.

SINCE 1860 this Mission has had a dormitory in Parker Street, Little Queen Street, Holborn, which was originally intended as a cheap lodging-house for servants and workwomen out of place. Thanks to the growth of the Y.M.C.A., the G.F.S., and similar Societies, there is much more provision for servants than there was in those early years, and it is now felt that the requirements of the Mission will be better served by devoting these Parker Street premises to the needs of its own candidates than by lodging women of any other class.

The dormitory has therefore been remodelled and opened as *The Parker Street Hostel*, and a resident Lady is now in charge. Here there will be lodgings for the Nurse candidates before they begin their Hospital training; and here also the Nurse who has finished her course at a general Hospital may stay while waiting for admission to the Hospital in which she is to gain that Certificate for Maternity work which it is so absolutely necessary that a District Nurse should possess. Here, too, in the midst of a very poor neighbourhood, she will be able to gain some knowledge of the practical work of a district and of the methods of dealing with various difficult cases.

On a recent date the opening of the Hostel was made the occasion of a meeting of the friends of the Mission, who assembled in large numbers. During the meeting the General Superintendent, Mrs. Selfe Leonard, in a review of the Mission's history, made the following statements about the Nurses:—

"The Nursing of twenty-seven years ago was necessarily of a different standard from that of to-day, but we can truthfully say that we have kept pace with the times.

These changes could not be made all at once, but we rejoice to know that our Nurses are now second to none in training and equipment. Those we train ourselves receive the same training as that demanded of the Queen's Jubilee Nurses—with the addition of a certificate for Maternity Nursing, gained in a special Hospital; while a very considerable number on our staff have received three or four years' Hospital training.

We regret to state that the fact of our Nurses forming a branch of the Biblewoman's Mission—although the duties of Biblewoman and Nurse are distinct—precludes us from participating in the Royal Fund for the training of Nurses.

One branch of our Nursing presents a special feature, and the idea originated with this Society. It is this. Certain of our Nurses are told off to nurse solely the maternity cases, attended by the students of some of our large Hospitals. Only those who are acquainted with such work can know how great is the boon alike to patient and student. We have frequent testimony from the physicians who oversee this department of the untold value of our aid, and of how lives are saved and danger averted by skilled Nursing.

The cost of every Nurse, including salary, uniform, kit, and medical comforts is £62 a year."

Sir William Broadbent then rose and gave the following testimony to the value of the Nurses:—

"I am brought here by my interest in one parti-

cular branch of this work, which is that of District Nursing.

In my younger days I had personal experience of work among the poor without the advantage of Nurses such as those now provided by this Association; and I have since seen the enormous help which Nurses of this character give in the treatment of the sick poor. I can especially speak of the value of these maternity Nurses, for that is a branch of work in which I have had considerable experience among the poor, and I know how many lives have been lost for want of the care and management and training which these Nurses bring to bear in such cases.

Since then I have had opportunities of personal observation of the value of their services, and no words of mine can convey to those familiar with the subject the difference which the aid of these Nurses makes in the care of the sick. Without good Nursing the work and help of the medical man is often entirely defeated, and the first prescription of the physician is good Nursing.

It is a matter of the greatest pleasure and gratification to me to see an organisation of this kind doing such extensive work, the details of which we have just heard. Beyond my own personal testimony I have little to say, except to tell you how I have been struck with astonishment at the magnificent organisation of the whole of this work, and I think the idea of engrafting upon the Biblewoman's Mission this beneficent scheme of Nursing of the sick poor is one of the most fertile and useful developments which I have ever known.

I am quite sure that under the good management which we have had described, the fine organisation and the way in which the whole work is co-ordinated and made thoroughly efficient, there is a great future before this Society.

The principal department, which is the newest development, is a most useful development, and I can only say it gives me extreme pleasure to contribute in the smallest way, by offering my testimony to the value of this wonderfully organised and beneficial work."

Dr. Amand Routh then spoke as follows:—

"I have for a good many years now been responsible for the management of the maternity department at Charing Cross Hospital. When I first came there as physician, what struck me as most disadvantageous was the entire absence of any Nursing. It was impossible for the Nursing department at Charing Cross Hospital, though they did their best, to provide Nurses adequately trained from the district Nursing point of view; for that requires additional training to what the ward will teach. The requirements of a Nurse who has to do this district Nursing is different in many respects from the duty of a Nurse in private cases, where everything is ready to hand, and by ringing a bell she gets what is wanted, whereas in the poor district it is exactly the opposite; as a rule they have to manufacture what is required out of very imperfect materials.

Well, after a time I heard of this Mission, and at first I made an effort to get the Nurses when wanted from this Society, but for a time not very much was done. Subsequently, through the kindness of Mrs. Selfe Leonard, it was arranged that this Society should do the Nursing entirely for that department, and I am here to give practical testimony to the good done.

We have had the Nurses now for two or three years,

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