

Rural Nursing.

We have been asked to express our opinion concerning the scheme for Nursing in Rural Districts, as expounded by the Earl of Winchelsea and those who took part in the discussion at the Conference held last week at Stafford House under the auspices of the Council of County Nursing Associations.

We would preface our remarks with the expression of very warm sympathy with the efforts now being made to nurse the sick poor in country villages, and we are well aware that economic conditions make it impossible at present to organise such Nursing on liberal educational lines, but the Conference proved extremely useful to the trained Nurses present—none of whom took part in the discussion—as it showed us very distinctly the points of view from which the question is approached by the lay mind, and proved indisputably how necessary it is that there should be more and more exchange of thought between Nurses and the general public, for whose benefit they are primarily trained.

Personally, we are of opinion that all work should be thorough, and we are sceptical of any nursing being of true value to the community that is not thorough; therefore we take exception at once to any scheme of training Nurses which does not include a certain amount of practical attendance on the sick in Hospital or Infirmary wards prior to gaining experience by attending the sick poor in their own homes; the training given at Plaistow does not include this experience, and we therefore take exception to it.

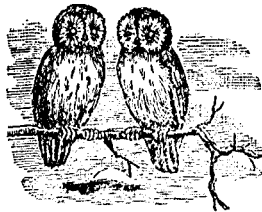
Again, granting that the local village women who are now selected as Nurses under the County Association scheme have proved themselves the most acceptable to their neighbours when ill—and there is much to be said for this argument—we still think that, even with twelve months' training (and this ought to be the minimum), they have no right to assume the title of Trained Nurse. Their position is that of a useful domestic help, with a few months' experience in commonplace Nursing details; and, given they are clean, capable housewives, they are, no doubt, an immense comfort to the sick poor when laid by. I presume their duties include scrubbing, cooking, washing, and keeping the place in order—a very honourable work, too, when well done—but it does not, in itself, constitute Nursing, and, without trained supervision, no very high order of Nursing can be accomplished by women unless their experience is thorough. I should like, therefore, to hear of a new title being given to these useful women. Cottage Helps would describe them very truly,

and, with expansion, their work may become of more and more value to the community.

The announcement that the Queen's Jubilee Institute will affiliate and inspect Midwife Nurses with six months' training will, no doubt, have a beneficial effect upon their work generally; but if the general cases of village illness are also to be nursed by the midwife Nurses, we foresee danger and disorganisation in the near future. In all cheaply-worked schemes the tendency to be content with a low standard of work and efficiency must be guarded against, and the Queen's Jubilee Institute owes an undeniable and deep responsibility to the women of England, that nothing shall be done under the prestige of its authority, to recognise a standard of Nursing for the sick poor which would not be tolerated or considered efficient for the sick rich.

We hope the Queen's Commemoration Fund will place such ample funds, in the near future, at the disposal of the Queen's Jubilee Institute that they will be in a position to raise the standard of urban and rural District Nursing all over the land; and that, in the future, "Queen's Nurse" will be synonymous with *thoroughly-trained Nurse*.

The Matrons' Council.



We have pleasure in announcing that upon the invitation of the Matron's Council, Mrs. Hunter Robb (*née* Isabel Hampton), the late Superintendent of the Johns Hopkins Training School for Nurses, at Baltimore, has consented to contribute a paper on "Alumnæ Associations of Graduate Nurses," to be read at the January Conference. Mrs. Hunter Robb took a leading part in starting the organisation of School Alumnae in the United States, organisations which are now spreading all over the States and Canada. The principles of such Societies are: the co-operation in connection with each Nursing School of all its certificated Nurses—for mutual help and protection—and, as we learned from Miss L. L. Dock's able paper on a National Organisation of Nurses, these School Alumnae are to play a very important part in affiliating with, and therefore being represented on the great Central Council. We feel sure that Mrs. Hunter Robb's paper will arouse much interest in Nursing circles.

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