

in workhouse infirmaries is totally different to that which obtained thirty years ago, and the Marylebone Infirmary, and the New Infirmary, Birmingham, are evidences of what has been accomplished in Poor Law Nursing reform.

It is now eighteen years ago, since the Workhouse Nursing Infirmary Association was founded with the view of supplying Boards of Guardians with competent and duly trained nurses, and there is every reason to congratulate it upon the work which it has accomplished. The difficulty which Boards of Guardians experience in obtaining efficient nurses is well known, and the Association tries to overcome this, by defraying the cost of the training of suitable women, on the condition that they engage to serve, for a definite period, under the Association in Poor Law institutions. The chief difficulties with which the Association has had to contend have been, the need of funds to carry on the work, the need of suitable candidates for training, and the difficulty of persuading nurses to stay in the country infirmaries when trained, owing to their being placed under the supervision, and control, of untrained masters and matrons.

Undoubtedly, in the future, the relations of nurses in Workhouse Infirmaries to these officers will undergo revision. Not a week passes at present, without evidence in the daily press of the friction resulting from the present arrangements, and of the impossibility of their continuance. What is clearly necessary is that the nurses in the larger infirmaries should be placed under the supervision of a trained superintendent, who should be held responsible that their work is efficiently performed, and for their discipline and control. The same supervision might be exercised to some extent in the smaller infirmaries by a visiting superintendent. The relations between the Medical Superintendent and the Matron must be altered in accordance with those in force in all well-managed General Hospitals. It is necessary, also, to increase the number of nurses in most if not all infirmaries, and, more especially, to provide an adequate staff of night-nurses; and lastly, it is imperative that all pauper help be abolished.

OBSTETRIC NURSING.

We have, then, briefly traced the rise and progress of the chief branches of Nursing. There is one department which is now in its infancy, but which we imagine will grow, perhaps, to be the most important of all within the next ten years. Monthly nursing, as it is termed, has hitherto been to a very large extent left in the hands of women who have had little, if any

general training, and only the most limited education in the special duties which devolve upon them. It will appear to our successors to be most extraordinary that, whilst general nursing has advanced by leaps and bounds, the department to which we allude is practically as undeveloped now as it was some twenty years ago, and that almost at the close of the nineteenth century two or three months' work in a lying-in hospital, without the slightest previous knowledge or experience, should be regarded as sufficient to entitle any woman to a certificate of efficiency, and to qualify her to undertake the nursing charge of a mother and her child. There can be little doubt that the dawn of a better era is breaking, and that in future this work will be undertaken by women who have had a thorough general training, and afterwards have passed through a course of special education in this department. Indeed, we would go further, and express our conviction that the Obstetric Nurse of the future will be qualified in midwifery as well as in monthly nursing, and that the present and old-world midwife will be eliminated by the advent of this well-trained woman who will be glad to work under medical control and direction, a position which appears to the ignorant and self-sufficient midwife of the present day, to be superfluous, if not humiliating.

NURSING ORGANISATION.

Finally, we come to the story of how the threads of the nursing profession have, during the last ten years, been drawn together, and how the great body of nurses have been formed into a skilled calling and profession, incorporated by the ancient form of a Royal Charter, and thus enabled to unite together, to secure the strength which union alone can give, to work together for the improvement and advancement of their calling, and for their mutual comfort and support, especially in times of sickness, adversity and old age.

In 1887, this important movement was commenced, the initiative being taken by Mrs. Bedford Fenwick. She foresaw and pointed out that nurses were growing then into a large and important body of workers, but that each nurse in each department of the calling stood alone, and had no common bond, or means of common action, with her fellow-workers. She showed that there was absolutely no means of control or discipline in the calling, and that each nurse was, to a large extent, a law unto herself. She showed that the work of nurses was undertaken for profit by large numbers of quite ignorant, and often most untrustworthy women who, especially in private houses, were most dangerous to the sick, and who were constantly

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