

NURSING UNDER THE POOR LAW.

We notice with satisfaction that a feeling is springing up that there is need for further organisation and reform of nursing under the Poor Law. The Local Government Board last year, took the important step of abolishing pauper nursing, but so far, it has taken no action to provide nurses to take the place of the pauper assistants, or to render service under the Poor Law attractive to thoroughly trained nurses, and many Boards of Guardians therefore find themselves in a position of considerable difficulty.

We recently reported a most interesting and remarkable paper read by Miss Wilkie, the Lady Superintendent of the Halifax Workhouse Infirmary, which advocated the establishment of a uniform standard of training and education to be attained by the establishment of a nursing department by the Local Government Board, composed of professional and lay members, who should formulate a general scheme of training in detail, and be an examining body, all examination questions issuing from this source. There is no doubt that the formation of such a department would be of the utmost benefit to the sick nursed under the Poor Law. The nurses would then possess a definite status, and the standard of nursing in infirmaries would be materially raised. We hope that some action in this direction may shortly be taken by the Local Government Board. Meanwhile, isolated instances of professional progress in infirmaries comes to hand from time to time, and the organization of the New Nursing School at the Lewisham Infirmary is a matter for congratulation. The pupils are trained for three years, during which time they receive theoretical and practical instruction from the Medical Superintendent and the Matron, and they are certificated after examination by the Medical Superintendent in conjunction with an independent examiner, a system which is in our opinion entirely on the right lines.

DISTRICT NURSING.

During the past year the work of the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for nurses has been considerably increased, the increased funds subscribed last year in commemoration of the Diamond Jubilee, having enabled the Institute to engage additional nurses. A large proportion of these are thoroughly trained nurses, but we are still waiting to hear that the Insti-

tute has petitioned for an alteration of the clause in its Charter which makes nurses who have received one year's training eligible for acceptance as Queen's Nurses. This standard can in no way be considered an efficient one at the present day, and though we believe it is practically rendered null and void by the selection of nurses of wider experience, yet the fact that a term of a year's hospital training is officially recognised as sufficient for a Queen's Nurse cannot but be deplored.

RURAL NURSING.

New County Nursing Associations have been formed during the past year, but we regret that the so-called Cottage Nurses employed by these Associations do not receive sufficient training to warrant their adopting the title of nurse. As cottage helps they no doubt prove of considerable use; but women with a few months' experience in district nursing have not the knowledge and skill to have given them the charge of the poor when sick. We hope the standard of training for Cottage Nurses will be considerably extended in the near future.

MILITARY NURSING.

The nursing of military hospitals remains much in the same condition as formerly, and much still remains to be done to bring things up to a modern standard. The Army Nursing Sisters do excellent work, but they are obliged, to a great extent, to make bricks without straw, the control they possess over the orderlies working under them being of the most nominal description. Until a thorough system is arranged of training for orderlies, and they are relieved of duties which have no connection with nursing, until some prestige attaches to the position, and until the Sisters are given adequate authority over their subordinates, so long will the nursing of military hospitals leave much to be desired. We understand that the Commander-in-Chief sympathises with the views of those who desire progress in the Army Nursing Service in nursing matters, and we have every hope, therefore, that reforms may be initiated in the system of military nursing.

During the past year the Army Sisters have done good work, so far as they have been permitted, in nursing the sick and wounded of the Soudan campaign, but much disappointment was felt by the Sisters that their valuable work was confined to the base hospital at Cairo, and that the sick and wounded in the field were attended entirely by male orderlies. The

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