

**Workhouse Infirmary Nursing Association.**

WHEN it was announced about a year ago that the above Society felt that the time had come when its work of training and providing nurses for workhouse infirmaries must cease, as work of such national importance should be done by the State, we expressed sincere regret. We are therefore the more glad to learn that the Executive Committee of the Workhouse Infirmary Nursing Association are again tackling this difficult question, and we have no doubt that they will do much to rouse the Local Government Board to a true sense of its duty on this most important and pressing question.

The Association—which has for its Vice-Presidents Miss Louisa Twining, the *doyenne* of Infirmary reform, and the Hon. Mrs. J. G. Talbot—has met in conference several energetic Guardians of the Poor to discuss the question, at which the following resolution was passed unanimously:

“That in the opinion of this meeting it is desirable that a Committee be formed forthwith, with a view to studying the difficulties connected with the supply of trained nurses for workhouse infirmaries.”

All delegates appointed by Boards of Guardians were elected together with the Executive Committee of the W.I.N.A., into a Committee, and it is proposed to hold another meeting at an early date.

Miss Louisa Twining has kindly given to the “Municipal Journal and London” the following valuable information:—

“After an experience of over 20 years in endeavouring to provide nurses for our great State Department of the Poor-law, I will gladly give you the opinions at which our “Workhouse Nursing Association” has arrived.

“We are glad to note any and every effort which is being made to stir the Local Government Board to take action in the matter, for we believe that the responsibility lies, at least in the first instance, with that body. But we do not consider that the proposal of the Runcorn Guardians is necessary or desirable—at least at present—as the existing institutions are far from being utilised as they might be.

“I will briefly state what we believe to be the remedies required for the present deadlock, for such it really amounts to.

“1. That every poor-law infirmary, and workhouse wards which contain over 200 beds, should be utilised for training probationers, on the understanding that all are bound to poor-law service for a term of years; after which period a pension

should be given as to nurses in other State Departments. Some may be trained in hospitals as well, should the vacancies in infirmaries not be sufficient.

“2. The position of the nurse must be made more secure and independent by giving her more freedom of action in her own department, with less interference in nursing matters from the master and matron of the workhouse, the medical officer being the one to whom she is responsible.

“3. The competition in nursing being now so great salaries must be raised, and greater comfort in food, and recreation, and rest allowed. The expenses of training probationers would not be great, as salaries would not be expected, and their services would be reckoned at least as part payment by the institutions. The service would then become as attractive as in other State Departments. But the necessary funds will have to be supplied either by the L.G.B. or the Central Committee of Guardians from the rates. The enormous sums now spent in vain in advertising will at least be saved.

“4. We propose that instead of a private and entirely voluntary association, as hitherto, boards of guardians should themselves take up the matter—form themselves into a central committee, or local and country ones; and thus, with great weight and authority, bring their suggestions before the Central Board, on whom the authority rests, to carry out the order issued by themselves in 1897, which is now practically a dead letter.”

We have one more suggestion to make, viz., that the proposed committee (which must meet in conference) should unite with the Central Committee of Poor-law Conferences, and communicate at once with their hon. sec., Mr. Chance, or the Poor-law Unions' Association.

I may add that of course the infirmaries must limit their probationers to those who bind themselves for poor-law work alone.

We have every confidence that if such an expression of opinion from the recognised managers of our poor-law institutions were carried out the results would be what we all desire to see, and the present deadlock would be ended.”

This question of providing trained nurses in Poor Law Infirmaries is most urgent, and as it is one in which every intelligent woman should take an interest, we should advise them to procure “Workhouses and Pauperism and Women's Work in the Administration of the Poor Law,” by Miss Twining.

The object of this volume is to give a connected review of Poor Law Management and Reform

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