

account. Our Nursing Home does splendid work among the poor people in a very crowded part of London. It started ten years ago, and everyone wonders now how they could have got on without it. Often in crowded homes, where people are ill, and have only their friends to look after them, the nurse is the only one who knows anything about sanitation; that is a special part of her profession. Each of our nurses pay about twelve or fourteen visits a day, working under the doctors and carrying out their instructions. Then, too, they go to many people who cannot get into the hospitals, and who it is safer to have nursed at home, such as the mother of a family, to move whom would mean breaking up the home altogether. So far as I can learn, there is a tremendous field for this work.

LADY ABERDEEN said: The Victorian Order in Canada have made it necessary that any nurse must have gone through the full training course. The opinion has also been expressed that the full hospital training does not fit the nurse to be a district nurse; she becomes too dependent upon all the functions of the hospital, and is not so well fitted to be a district nurse as if training in the actual districts themselves could be provided for her.

MISS SCOVIL said: In the hospital I was at in the United States, nurses are sent for one month during the last six months of the training to work among the sick poor. This work has been going quietly for more than eight years, and we find it a very great advantage, not only to the nurses, but to the poor of the community. Our Hospital is supported by voluntary contributions, and it makes this return to the public for their generosity. It does not make any difference in the arrangement of the hospital or to the nurses. People come to the hospitals for advice, and district nursing is included in the curriculum of the school.

MISS BREAY said: There is one branch of District Nursing upon which I should like to say a few words—District Midwives. I do not wish anybody to practise District Midwifery who is not a thoroughly trained nurse first of all, for I know of no nursing which makes such sudden demands upon the resources. The District Maternity Home, with which I was connected for some time, has also an In-patients' Department; and that, I think, is advisable for two reasons; first, because sometimes a case must be sent to the Home, and also it forms a field for the special training that nurses require before they are sent out into the Districts. The pupils cannot be taught so much in detail in the houses of the poor outside, as in the wards of the hospital under careful supervision. The nurses used to come to us for three months' training—that was very much too short a time—but it was a matter of £ s. d.; pupils cannot be kept longer because they cannot afford the money, therefore you must do the best you can in the short period demanded by the Obstetrical Society. If this Society would insist upon a longer training, it would make things very much easier for the Maternity Homes. After their training, the pupil midwives are sent out with a District Midwife. Of course, there ought always to be a doctor behind the midwife, who can be sent for. I do not think it is right for any midwife not to know what doctor she should send for; for, if assistance is needed suddenly, the patient may die while you are running about looking for a doctor. The work of a District Midwife is most useful, most appreciated by

the poor, and if properly regulated and brought into line with trained nursing, it is one of the most beneficent branches of District Nursing.

MISS GRACE STEBBING said: I think there is great need for nurses for what we generally call the well-to-do classes, who really are often a great deal poorer than the so-called poor. A short time ago I was nursing a friend who was in very straitened circumstances. I was not sure of the right thing to do, and I tried to get a nurse; but I could not find one under £2 2s. a week. Either they said "I am for the poor," or else, "You must pay £2 2s. a week." My friend could not possibly give so much, so that I had to do the best I could. In another case, I went to the District Nurse and begged her to come to some one who was very ill. She said she could not come, as she was for the poor. But on my representing the case to her, she came—but she came out of the little time she had off duty for her own sleep and her own meals.

MRS. BEDFORD FRNWICK said: Many trained nurses in England think that a "Queen's Nurse" should be synonymous with the most efficiently trained nurse possible, but according to the present regulations of the Queen's Jubilee Nurses, she does not so stand. It seems to me that with a fund founded by the women of England, we should not be satisfied until the standard of training for the nurses of the poor is quite as high as that for the nurses of the rich. When the Queen's Jubilee Fund was started, one year's training in a general hospital, and six months district work was the regulation standard. Now the term is two years, but I should like to see it raised to three years. In Scotland I believe this three years curriculum is very nearly carried out. They have two years' general training, and special training besides for Maternity, Fever, and District work. If the Queen's Jubilee Institute insisted that a nurse should pass through a six months training in district nursing, as well as having received her three years' certificate in a General Hospital, that would, I think, be a proper standard for a Queen's Nurse. I hope that before very long the Queen's Jubilee Institute Committee will reconsider their relative duty to the poor, to the public, and to the nursing profession, by fixing some definite minimum standard of education for their nurses. A three years standard of nursing education is now exacted for all Government nursing appointments in this country; in the Army and Navy Services, and under the Local Government Board, no nurse is placed in a position of authority unless she has completed this term, and holds a certificate for three years training, and the standard for a "Queen's Nurse" should be at least equal to that demanded by these official bodies.

LADY ABERDEEN thanked those who had taken part in the discussion, and moved the adjournment of the meeting.

The value of the work done in Canada, by the Victorian Order of Nurses, should be a direct incentive to philanthropists in our other Colonies to commence a similar organization for their sick poor. At the same time, it is much to be hoped that the basis of education adopted for the District Nurses in such Colonies may be the three years' standard, which is now generally recognized as essential to the training of a professional nurse.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)