

NURSING UNDER THE POOR LAW.

The organization of Nursing under the Poor Law has received some measure of attention at public conferences, and it is to be regretted that time did not permit of this subject being discussed at the International Congress, for nothing can be more important or more urgent than the introduction of some new system. It is most essential that the position of the Matrons should be defined, and that they should be recognised as the heads of the nursing department and report directly to their Boards on their own province. Poor law Matrons also advocate the formation of a Poor Law Nursing Service, carrying with it some prestige and rank, so that a high class of nurse may be attracted to the service. It is also very desirable that some means should be devised by which those nurses trained under the Poor Law may be encouraged to remain in its service. At present, when they have obtained their certificates, they most frequently pass on to other branches of work.

PRIVATE NURSING.

In the private nursing world no educational standard, and no legal registration is enforced, and the condition of this branch of nursing is, therefore, just as undisciplined as last year. Half-trained, unsuitable women, are sent out as private nurses by commercial institutions whose object is to make money out of them, and as medical men insist on no fixed standard, many very undesirable women find employment in this branch of nursing, and bring disrepute upon it, with the result that well qualified and reputable nurses are blamed for the misdemeanors of undisciplined and immoral women.

DISTRICT AND RURAL NURSING.

The standard of the hospital training required of the nurses of the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute has now been raised to two years, instead of one year, which was formerly all that was required. This is a movement in the right direction, but until the Council of the Institute require the full certificate of a graduate nurse, namely, that obtained after passing satisfactorily through the three years' curriculum, the standard of the Jubilee Institute cannot be considered satisfactory. Presumably this will come, and certainly the right to the name of Queen's nurse, should carry with it the assurance that the nurse is fully trained.

MILITARY NURSING.

Military nursing is just now on the crest of the wave, and never, either in Europe or

America, has this branch of nursing received so much attention as during the past year, with the result that in the United States, a Bill dealing with the formation of an Army Nursing Department will be brought before Congress when it meets again.

The patent insufficiency of the nursing arrangements in the recent Soudan campaign has resulted in more liberal provisions being made for the nursing of the sick and wounded in the present war. Even now, however, there is a lack of efficient organization, and one has only to instance the fact that while dozens of nurses are being sent out to South Africa, there is no central Nursing Department to select and control them, and no Lady Superintendent of Nursing has been appointed. As we were smilingly informed by some of the Sisters leaving for active service, they are "all on an equality," which from a military point of view gives away the case. In the Medical Department there are various grades, as in the regular army, and the same system must ultimately be adopted in connection with the Nursing Department. We hope that one result of the present war will be to prove the need for reform at the War Office, and the outcome be its complete re-organisation, including that of the Army Nursing Department. At present, the appointments in this branch of the public service are regarded to a great extent as a means of bestowing Royal and Medical patronage, the whole method of selection—at least, so far as volunteers are concerned—being entirely personal, with the result that there is dissatisfaction and jealousy on all sides. When the war is over, we hope that all these points will be brought up and strictly investigated. When this time comes the Army Sisters themselves, many of whom are cognizant of the defects of military nursing, which are the result in many instances of a defective system, should be consulted, as they are in a position to give an expert opinion, and to point to the necessary remedy. We feel sure that many defects will be rectified in the near future; meanwhile, on the whole, there is little doubt that our soldiers will receive more care in this war than in any previous one. More Nursing Sisters have been sent out than ever before, and in addition many well trained nurses on the spot are being utilized, and are taking their part bravely and devotedly, availing themselves of the opportunity which they would not otherwise have had.

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