

a somewhat chaotic domestic vocation, or is it, by granting to nurses just legal status, to place them in a suitable position to acquire reasonable hours of labour, a progressive and practical curriculum of education, and a legitimate degree of self-government? This expansive view of the question is what we should like to hear the Women's Liberal Federation and analagous societies of women discuss, and we hope in the near future they will do it.

The annual report of the Poplar Hospital for Accidents contains a just meed of praise of the Matron, Miss Bland, and her nursing staff, which states: "Thanks rendered in official reports are often apt to be perfunctory, but our acknowledgments of the services of Miss Bland and her staff are made with absolute sincerity." These little expressions of appreciation are surprisingly inspiring.

We are courteously informed by Mr. S. F. Stone, the Chairman of the Private Nursing Branch of the Institution of Trained Nurses at Leicester, that we are in error (we are glad of it) in supposing that any financial assistance is given by the Private Nursing Branch to the District Nursing Branch of the Institution. Mr. Stone says:—

"The Leicester Trained Nursing Institution has for several years had two absolutely separate branches (the Private Nursing Branch and the District Nursing Branch), two entirely different committees, separate banking accounts, and different chairmen, and each branch issues annually separate Reports. I enclose you copies of the Reports of both branches for the past year.

To show you how I sympathise with your remarks generally—but not as applicable to us—I will only add that although I have been connected with this Institution, and a subscriber also to the District Branch for 34 years, I would not continue Chairman of the Private Branch a day after any part of the earnings of our private nurses had been 'appropriated to pay for charity,' or in any way diverted from them."

The Lambeth Board of Guardians recently decided to appoint a trained nurse to take charge of the nursery at the workhouse, on the report of Miss Stansfeld, the Local Government Board inspector, who complained that when she visited the place some of the children were crying "that bitter cry of hunger." It appeared that the ward was in charge of three old women, who had pauper help, and it was suggested that the paupers had drank the milk intended for the children.

There are several points worth noting in the Report of the Workhouse Infirmary Nursing Association for 1900, being the 21st Annual Report of this useful society, which has now

removed its offices to its old quarters at 6, Adam Street, Strand. It is satisfactory to the Association to find that almost every point in connection with nursing in country workhouse infirmaries on which it has dwelt for the last twenty years, has been taken up by Poor Law Inspectors in their reports during the past year, namely: the difficulty of procuring and retaining the services of nurses, the continuance of the employment of paupers as nurses, inadequate provision for nursing by night, the insufficient proportion of nurses to patients, the employment of probationers in the smaller workhouse infirmaries where training is impossible, friction between Masters and Matrons and the nurses.

Dealing with the last point, Mr. E. B. Wetherhed, a Poor Law Inspector, says that it must have a bad effect upon the general administration, and goes on: "I do not propose to discuss on which side the fault lies, but I do look forward to the day when, in workhouses of any size, the infirmaries will be detached, and greater responsibilities imposed on the Medical Officer and Superintendent Nurse. Even under the present circumstances, I think that this friction could be, to some extent, avoided, if, where there is a Superintendent Nurse, the responsibilities of the Master and Matron could be defined. I am not unfrequently asked what these duties are. Respective Masters and Matrons take different views, and the same remark applies to Superintendent Nurses. Arising out of this uncertainty, some Masters and Matrons interfere more than others, and not always with tact. On the other hand, nurses sometimes appear not to realise that the Master and Matron have responsibilities with regard to the infirmary, and they naturally desire to discharge them." He then discusses the desirability of training probationers in smaller workhouse infirmaries which cannot rank as training schools, the practice of putting young probationers on night duty, and lays down the rule that probationers should only be placed on night duty with a qualified nurse, and "in no case unless they have served at least one year of their term of probation and arrived at a suitable age."

In connection with the question of the constant friction which occurs between workhouse officials and Superintendent Nurses, it is interesting to notice that the Paisley Parish Council have created a new and important precedent in their effort to solve the difficulty, and have resolved to combine the offices of Lady Superintendent of the Hospital, and Matron of the Poorhouse and Asylum at Crew Road, Paisley. It will be interesting to watch the working of this experiment.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)