

Owing to the position of nursing in France at the present time, it is, the article goes on to say, natural that French nurses have not yet entered into relations with the International Council of Nurses, but now a nursing school on modern lines has been organized in Paris, and it is hoped that before long France will be amongst the countries represented on the International Council.

Referring to the objects of the International Nurses' Congress, Mdlle. Biais describes them as characterized by a breadth of view not always met with in professional congresses.

We are glad to learn that both the International Council of Nurses and the Congress at Buffalo are arousing the interest in France which is evinced in the well-informed article to which we have drawn attention.

The following Sisters of the Army Nursing Service are on their way home on board the "Saxon," which left Cape Town on September 11th:—Sisters Palmer, Gordon, Nutter, Phillips, Hunsellin, Beetham, Douglas, Rider, and Wells.

Miss Louisa Twining, whose views as a pioneer in workhouse nursing reform must always carry weight, deals with the difficulty of providing an adequate nursing service for Poor Law infirmaries in the course of an admirable pamphlet, entitled: "Some Thoughts on the Poor Law and Poverty." She writes:—"I may be allowed to suggest some of the chief reforms which seem desirable in the administration of public charity. First, in regard to the care of the sick, some more effective means must be adopted for providing the "trained nurses" which were demanded in 1897 by an order of the Board, but which have never yet been forthcoming in any sufficient number to equal the demand. Voluntary enterprise has attempted to supply this want during more than twenty-one years; but to cope with the present needs of over six hundred institutions has been found to be an impossible task, and it has therefore been abandoned. What we require, then, is State provision for State needs—a training provided for women in existing infirmaries, with sufficient inducements to enter upon, and to remain in, poor-law work for a certain term of years. A scheme of, say, three years' free training for the profession of nursing, with a recognized standard of efficiency, would prove attractive to many young women who cannot afford the cost; besides, the prestige of belonging to a "State Department" would act as an additional inducement.

And their ultimate position should be made more secure; they should be made more independent (in the country) of the master and matron in regard to their nursing duties, the doctor being the proper authority in these matters; they should receive increased privileges and comforts; and the work should be made less arduous and trying, or else it will not be undertaken at all. In the metropolis, however, which is in advance of all other places in these respects, more power should be given to the matrons (trained and educated women) as regards their own department and the control of the nurses, who, at present, are under the authority of the medical superintendent of the infirmary.

In the next place there is a great need for a largely increased number of women as inspectors of workhouses throughout the country (at present there is only one for the metropolitan district, where—may I say?—her work is least required). I venture to think that, if some women had filled these posts fifty years ago, that deplorable state of things would not have existed. And as the appointment of at least one woman inspector was made twenty-five years ago, it is difficult to understand the delay that has ensued in developing a more effective system. Women are everywhere acknowledged to be the proper authorities on domestic and nursing matters, and, therefore, they should not be excluded from the responsible supervision of these departments in the public service.

I cannot leave the question of the care of the sick without mentioning the difficulties which arise in the smaller workhouses of the country, where it is found impossible to attract or maintain the services of fully trained nurses for only a few patients. It has been suggested, as a remedy for this defect, that, following the example long since carried out in district schools, imbecile, and other asylums, the workhouse buildings should be classified, and appropriated to special purposes. Thus each institution might be controlled by officers specially qualified to deal with particular classes of the indigent poor. But, under our present system, many of the workhouses in rural districts are not half filled, and yet entail great cost for their maintenance and repair. If one could be selected in a central position, it might be set apart as a hospital for several unions, and might thus have a sufficient number of patients to ensure an adequate supply of skilled nurses. The only objection which has been urged against this suggestion is that the distance from "home" would be a serious deterrent to the applicants. But, in these days of easy locomotion, distance is no longer so difficult a matter; and one good result might be that the relations would be less fre-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)