

The League of St. Bartholomew's Nurses has an official organ, *League News*, which is published twice a year.

These are at present our only publications which are edited by trained nurses.

Nursing Notes, the organ of the Midwives' Institute, is also the official organ of various nursing Societies, the members of which contribute largely to its columns, although it has a lay editor.

Incredible as it may appear, the official organ of the Royal British Nurses' Association is edited by the Secretary, who is a laywoman.

Asylum News is the organ of the Association of Asylum Workers, and is edited by a medical man.

SUMMARY.

It will be seen that while in individual hospitals the standard of nursing is progressive and maintained at a high level, there is need for greater cohesion between the various schools, the members of which are largely unknown to one another. The problem to be solved in the future is how best our scattered forces may be brought into line, and side by side, in the strength which comes only from union, may work for the public good and for their professional well being.

Trained Nurses' Day.

A RETROSPECT AND A FORECAST.*

By MISS CATHERINE J. WOOD.

The sick man has been with us from all time, therefore the nursing of the sick is not an invention of the present day, but it has gained in common with all cognate subjects relating to life and health by the light which has been shed upon it in modern times. The nun by the bedside in the convent infirmary was none the less a sick nurse though she was groping her way among the perplexities and complexities of human disorders without the aid of scientific knowledge, and she did her work well, we, who stand in the full light of scientific nursing, must own this. When sick nursing was undertaken, apart from the religious life of the convent, it entered on a new phase, and a phase in which it touched its lowest point. From being the occupation of the well-born and the religious-minded woman it became the employment of the outcast and the immoral.

It was at this point that several philanthropists, Pastor Fliedner in Germany, Mrs. Elizabeth Fry

in England, and others whose sympathies had been aroused by the ghastly suffering and neglect of the sick, initiated the deaconesses of Kaiserswerth and the Nursing Sisters of Bishopsgate Street. The system of training for both orders was the same, they learnt the technical work in the hospital, and were taught general domestic service in the institution. The whole of their life being ruled and directed as in a religious house was supposed to be devoted to the service of the sick, though they were without the life vows of the nun. It was an essentially Protestant revival; it sprang out of the heart of Protestant nations; the Roman Catholic nun was still nursing in the infirmary, but her methods were the same, she had not improved her training. The great hospitals up to this date (I am speaking of the first quarter of the 19th century) were unaffected by the movement; the masters of the art of healing had not yet grasped the fact that medicine practised without nursing must be one-sided in action; that until the intelligent ministrant took her place as the eyes and hands of the doctor, the best possible was not done for the patient. At this time the skilled nursing of the patient was, of necessity, left in the hands of the medical students, who were inclined to look on the patient as so much material provided for their instruction; the "nurses" were drawn from the lowest of the surrounding neighbourhood, such as preferred sick nursing to street walking, or perhaps were able to combine the two trades. This was the state of nursing as recently as in the sixties, I am now speaking of matters within my own knowledge; the charwoman still reigned supreme in the great hospitals in London, as the night-nurse, and was in request when a "special" was wanted; strange though it may sound this system was one of the hardest to kill. As a variant on this method of night-nursing the nights were shared out among the day nurses, the turn coming every third or fourth night, with the result that the most convalescent patient was set up, the night-nurse taking the vacated bed.

With the Crimean War and Miss Nightingale a better prospect opened out before the sick; Miss Nightingale's work is known to all, it is written in the pages of history, it lives in the heart of every true nurse, to her is the credit of placing before the world the need of efficient training for sick nurses; herself a student of Kaiserswerth, she contended that no intention, however good; no enthusiasm, however fervid, could supply the lack of technical knowledge or practical skill in handling the patient. This sounded the death-knell of Sairey Gamp and all her sisters; since 1870 every hospital has become in a more or less degree a training school for nurses. At first the training of the nurses

* Presented on Trained Nurses' Day in the Temple of Music Buffalo Exposition, September 21st, 1901.

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