

after only one year's training, a Poor Law probationer would be able to obtain a certificate and pose before the public as a fully-qualified nurse. It was thought that the term "qualified probationer" or "assistant nurse" would be a better designation.

The work of the Cardiff branch of the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute has of late increased so much that the Committee have decided to add another nurse to the staff. This is evidently necessary, as 6,304 more visits were paid last year than in the preceding one.

The Liverpool Queen Victoria District Nursing Association has, during the last year, sustained a severe loss by the deaths of Mr. William Rathbone, Mrs. Withers (Lady Superintendent of the North Home), and Mr. Hamilton Gilmour. We are glad to learn from the report presented at the recent annual meeting that the work of the Association shows steady progress. There are now connected with it four Matrons, forty-one nurses, and four Queen's probationers. A useful branch of the nurses' work is in the elementary schools, eighteen of which have been attended, and 60,745 dressings done in this connection. The Lord Mayor, in proposing the adoption of the report and balance-sheet, appealed to all denominations in the city to put the finances on a better footing, an appeal which was endorsed by the Bishop of Liverpool.

The Earl of Mount Edgcumbe recently presided at the annual general meeting of the Cornwall County Nursing Association, when it was reported that Miss Amy Hughes, the Superintendent of the County Nursing Associations affiliated with Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses, in her report of the Association's work for the past year, said that after a second visit to Cornwall she was much impressed by the good standard of work done by the nurses of the County Nursing Association.

An inquest was recently held on an old lady of seventy-six years of age, who committed suicide by hanging herself by means of a long piece of linen attached to an iron bar, and a strap passed twice round her neck. The evidence showed that she had been certified as of unsound mind while in a nursing home in Gloucester Gardens, which she left a fortnight before her death to return to her own house, by order of a Master in Lunacy. While in the home she had abstracted a knife from the luncheon room and concealed it in her dress. Two nurses were in attendance on her while in the home, and accompanied her to her house in Cambridge Gardens. Maud Burn, the night nurse, said she occupied the room next to the patient, and left the door open, so that if she moved she could hear her. She saw her at least hourly. At a quarter to seven on the

morning of her death she saw the patient; half an hour later she went in and found her hanging. She could not account for not having heard her move; she could not say where the strap came from. Mary Bain, the day nurse, said that, as far as she knew, the patient had nothing dangerous in her room. If she had seen the strap she would have removed it.

Dr. Charles Buttar said the patient had delusions, and could not manage her own affairs. There was nothing definitely suicidal, but he had given orders that she should be strictly watched. The jury, in returning a verdict of suicide while of unsound mind, added a rider that they considered there had not been sufficient vigilance shown in the supervision of the patient. Most nurses will think this verdict not a whit too strong. If a patient of suspected suicidal tendencies has two nurses, supervision should be constantly maintained, and the fact that she could conceal a strap, and later could hang herself, without the knowledge of the nurse on duty, proves, in our view, gross negligence.

We are glad to observe a remark in the *Lancet* that "the calling of a nurse has nowadays assumed such importance to the medical profession that it has become necessary for the safety of the public that all nurses should be under some kind of rule." It goes on to say, "that is, they should be either sent out by a well-known hospital, or, else they should be members of a co-operation or a sisterhood, or of some other responsible body." This is, after all, only tinkering with a question which must eventually be dealt with on broad lines. Like the profession of medicine itself, nurses need registration by the State, and the establishment of a General Nursing Council, which will define the minimum qualification for trained nurses and exercise general control over the members of the nursing profession. Although nursing co-operations have done much to better the industrial conditions under which nurses work, an ideal form of government cannot be carried out by self-constituted societies. Such societies themselves need bringing into line, as will be understood by those who have followed the history of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Co-operation of Trained Nurses, in reference to which the *Lancet* has made the remarks above quoted. It would be a courteous act on the part of the medical profession, to whom nurses are now of such importance, if it were to support their demand for State Registration and control.

It is important that the nurses in every hospital and infirmary should be instructed in methods of concerted action in case of fire, so that no time may

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)