

to them, and, as the men had not been trained, those instructions had not become a part of them, as ought to have been the case with men entrusted with their duty, and hence sanitation was practically entirely neglected." The doctors could not do more than they did; they toiled night and day, and went without food on occasions that they might attend to their duties, but they could not attend to everything—the teaching of the orderlies, for instance. It was quite feasible that the men should have a better training, but not under the present system.

The present system, the witness continued, "consists in training men for their duties in action, and that they have a fairly good grip of; but as to anything like the management of the sick, which are always enormously preponderating in every campaign, they have no useful instruction whatever. The attendance on the sick, in fact, is a more important matter than the attendance on the wounded, and it is very inadequately given under the present system."

The witness, continuing, said that many of the hospital orderlies had to be improvised from men on the spot. He did not think that "a wealthy country like ours, so circumstanced that it must of necessity occasionally have large wars, should be dependent, in assisting its sick and wounded during them, upon the chance picking up of orderlies from Volunteers, or from ordinary regiments; if it is going to fight and to have sickness and wounds, it ought to provide for them in time of peace. It is as much essential as artillery or engineering."

Hospital orderlies in this country should, said the witness, be trained very much as the Germans train them. They were constrained after their war of 1870-1871 to reorganise their Army Medical Department on a better footing, and on purpose to do so they now have their orderlies of the Army Medical Corps carefully instructed in time of peace in all the duties that will fall to them in time of war—attending on the wounded, attending on the sick, handling sick, washing sick, disinfection, and so on, and for that purpose they have special courses of training for these men. They have much larger and better-managed military hospitals than ours, where the non-commissioned officers and men receive a training superior to that in our Army. They also employ female nurses—deaconesses—to a very considerable extent in attendance on the sick and wounded, and female cooks, the consequence being that the cooking for sick men—men suffering from dysentery, typhoid, and so forth, where the feeding is the main part of their treatment—is very much better done than is possible with our male orderlies.

We propose to continue our review of Professor Ogston's evidence in our next issue.

(To be continued.)

The Training of Midwives and the Organisation of their Work.

"Our success or failure with this unending stream of babies is the measure of our civilisation."—*Mankind in the Making*.

RURAL DISTRICTS.

As we reported last week, two most interesting papers were read at the Conference of the National Union of Women Workers on the training of midwives. Miss Jane Wilson, member of the Central Midwives' Board, dealt, in connection with this subject, with Rural Districts, and said:—

"In responding to the invitation of your Committee to contribute a paper on this subject, I am in the difficult position of handling a matter for the elucidation of which essential facts and figures are not yet in existence. I will therefore ask you to pardon the somewhat tentative character of my remarks, and, further, to regard what I have to say as representing my personal opinions only.

"The passing of the Midwives' Act imposes a duty on all those who realise the enormous importance to the nation of the health of its mothers and of the infants who will be its future workers.

"We cannot say that legislation has been unduly hastened in this country, for since the seventeenth century this question has formed a ground for discussion. If, however, it be true that 'the councils to which Time hath not been summoned, Time will not ratify,' we may safely cherish a hope that the long period of past debate will have its due effect on the actual work of the future. Further, we must experience a distinct feeling of relief that the whole question has now entered a practical stage, that midwives will soon be under control, and that they will take their place as workers closely connected with the public health, and charged with responsibilities of which they must give account."

The speaker drew attention to the confusion that often still exists in the public mind between the duties of a midwife and those of a monthly (or maternity) nurse. Having made it clear that she was dealing with midwives, she proceeded to demonstrate the magnitude of the task awaiting the Central Midwives' Board by stating that in the estimation of authorities 60 per cent. of the births in Great Britain take place without the presence of a qualified medical practitioner, and that in many of the poorer districts as many as 70 or 90 per cent. of births are attended by women.

Miss Wilson believes that many untrained women will probably retire from practice, and the effect of the Midwives' Act will gradually be to substitute trained for untrained women. She points out that if we are to help efficiently in this matter exact knowledge of the main provisions of the Act itself is essential, and of the rules issued

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