

DISTRICT NURSING.

District or visiting nursing among the poor is increasingly extending, the principal organisation at work being the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute. In Ireland, by the efforts of the Countess of Dudley, the benefits of skilled nursing have been extended to some of the poorest districts. There is, unfortunately, a tendency on the part of some nursing associations to provide, for the care of the sick poor, women with very inadequate training in nursing. The three years' standard of hospital training is that which should be aimed at in this branch as in all others.

PRIVATE NURSING.

The lack of organisation in the private nursing world continues. The highly-trained nurse who undertakes this branch of work finds herself on a par, both economically and in regard to professional status, with any woman who chooses to do a uniform and undertake private nursing. At the same time there is no more responsible class of worker in the nursing world than the private nurse, who must be not only technically skilful, but full of resource and adaptability. In the future we believe that this branch of nursing will be regarded as one of the highest that a nurse can undertake; but the only means whereby the skilled can be differentiated from the unskilled, and their real value estimated, is by a system of Registration of those who have attained to a certain standard of knowledge. The public is now increasingly critical of its nurses, as, owing to its increased knowledge of sanitary and hygienic matters, and its greater experience of nursing matters, it is able to discriminate more than formerly between good and bad nursing.

THE ASYLUM WORLD.

In the asylum world, the terrible fire at Colney Hatch Asylum points the moral of the need for less keys and more nurses. The results following the admirable methods of nursing the insane at the District Asylum, Stirling, under the present able Medical Superintendent, Dr. Robertson, give hope for the future that better methods of nursing this afflicted section of the community will ultimately be generally adopted. The substitution of women, instead of men, as nurses in male wards, supervision by hospital-trained nurses, an increased nursing staff, and open instead of locked doors, form cardinal points in the methods at Stirling.

EXAMINATIONS FOR NURSES.

Examinations for nurses have been instituted during the past year by the British Gynæcological Society, which grants separate certificates for gynæcological and maternity nursing, and by the staffs of the Scottish maternity hospitals in obstetric nursing. The Gynæcological Society has incorporated two important principles in its methods. (1) It has associated with its medical examiners Matrons who have had special experience in these branches, and (2) it requires

evidence of general training before it admits candidates to its examination. The adoption of these methods must enhance the value of the certificate.

Other bodies examining nurses in special branches of work are the Central Midwives' Board, the London Obstetrical Society, the Medico-Psychological Society, and the Incorporated Society of Trained Masseuses, from which it is apparent that medical practitioners and nurses engaged in special branches of work do not intend to wait for a Central Examining Board in general nursing before obtaining, or receiving, independent evidence of competence in special branches. In the Colonies, a Central Examining Board of medical men and Matrons has been instituted in Victoria, and its authority accepted by the hospitals throughout the Colony, and New South Wales is contemplating a similar system.

In the United States, examining boards are being inaugurated in those States where Registration is in force.

THE MATRONS' COUNCIL.

The Matrons' Council has during the past year brought before the Council of Bedford College for Women the desirability of instituting a course of post-graduate instruction for nurses who wish to qualify for the higher posts in their profession. The suggestion was received in a most friendly spirit, the chief difficulty in the way of its adoption being the financial one. The Council of Bedford College is communicating with hospital authorities with the view of ascertaining the amount of support the scheme is likely to receive.

The Matrons' Council has also proposed that a fund should be raised for a national memorial to the nursing sisters who died in the South African War. When an appeal is made with this object it will doubtless receive wide-spread support.

LEGAL MATTERS.

A case which excited considerable public interest early in the year was the trial on the capital charge of Mrs. Amelia Sach and Mrs. Walters in connection with the murder of an infant. Mrs. Walters was stated in the Press to have been trained at St. Thomas's Hospital, a statement refuted on application to the authorities. Mrs. Sach was the proprietress of a Nursing Home at Finchley. Both women were convicted and hanged, the murder having been carried out by Walters, and Mrs. Sach being an accessory before the fact. Inquiry at Scotland Yard proved that there was no evidence of hospital training—either as a nurse or midwife—in either case, but it was pointed out that it is not a criminal offence for a woman to call herself a trained nurse.

Eleanor Susannah Gale, the proprietress of a Nursing Home at Kilburn, was also sentenced to two years' hard labour for abandoning infants entrusted to her care. Inquiry in this case proved she had been nursing for twenty-five years, but no

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