

urban Workhouses, our Medical Investigator reports, 'The nursing staff . . . insufficient'; in one case 'seriously inadequate.'"

*Ibid*: "It is clear that, in the proportion of doctors and nurses to patients, and in the variety and specialisation of the staff, even the best Poor Law Infirmary falls markedly below the standard of the London Hospitals."

Page 894: "An epileptic boy of 16, placed in the ordinary ward of a Workhouse Infirmary (where there was only one night nurse to six rooms and 49 patients), was found dead in the morning, having suffocated himself." This last quotation is taken from the *Times* of August 5, 1908, and occurs in the Minority Report as a suitable commentary on Dr. McVail's remarks.

Collate, now, the Majority, Minority, and Dr. Downes' reports on Poor Law nursing. Dr. Downes, it should be remembered, was one of the two Medical Inspectors of the Local Government Board, but resigned during the sitting of the Commission. His conclusions shall stand first, and it must be remembered that he speaks of a period dating back to 1838.

"Not less satisfactory is the record that, within the same period, the number of paid nurses of the sick indoor poor has risen from less than 200 to more than 6,000, many of whom are highly trained in their profession. . . . It is a significant proof of the public appreciation of these Infirmarys that the proportion of total deaths in London which occur in Poor Law institutions has risen from 12.3 per cent. in 1890 to 20.5 per cent. in 1907."

On the two points contained in this blissfully simple-minded paragraph I will comment later.

Take, secondly, the Majority Report:—

Page 273: "It appears that the great improvement in Workhouse nursing, which has taken place since the issue of the Nursing Order of 1897, has led many Guardians to suppose that little more remains to be done. Such, however, is not the case." Here follows the quotation from Dr. McVail, already given above, as to inadequacy. The Report proceeds: "A number of witnesses hold similar views, especially as to the inadequacy of the night nursing."

Page 274: "We endorse Dr. McVail's opinion that 'some of these very small institutions are in constant risk of inefficiency.'"

*Ibid*: "The proportion of nurses to patients in the urban Infirmarys is much lower than in the voluntary hospitals. . . . This does not necessarily imply insufficient nursing in the Infirmarys, but is partly accounted for by the difference in the character of the cases treated in the two classes of institutions. Thus,

acute cases, which predominate in the hospitals, require more nursing than chronic or senile bedridden cases, which predominate in the Infirmarys; but, after allowing for this distinction, Dr. McVail is of opinion that the nursing staff of several of the institutions visited by him is insufficient. Various witnesses have also expressed similar views. Miss Stansfeld thinks the strain is very much too great upon young nurses."

*Ibid*: "Apart from occasional insufficiency of nurses, the quality of the nursing in the Workhouse Infirmarys appears to be of a high standard, and this may also be said to apply generally to the training which the probationer nurses receive in the Infirmarys recognised as training schools."

*Ibid*: "Under the Nursing Order, 1897, we think that the objectionable features of the employment of paupers in Workhouses and Workhouse Infirmarys have been removed, and we should not wish to see its provisions made more elastic."

And so we pass on to the Minority Report.

ALBINA BRODRICK.

(To be concluded.)

## Lady Esher's First Aid Classes.

Lady Esher wishes it to be announced that her first aid classes are starting immediately after Easter. She has still a few vacancies in various districts, and would be glad if those wishing to join would apply at once, stating if they require day or evening classes.

## Not a Practical Scheme.

The War Office has issued the correspondence which has passed between Captain E. C. Baker and Colonel Sir Edward Ward relative to a First Aid Nursing Yeomanry Corps. On February 5th Captain Baker, as the organiser and commanding officer of the corps, wrote to Sir Edward Ward for encouragement and sympathy from Sir Edward or Mr. Haldane. Sir Edward Ward replied on March 16th, on behalf of the Army Council, that "the efforts were much appreciated. It was impossible, however, to adapt a nursing corps, however perfect, to work on the field of battle, and the Council could not include it in the Territorial scheme." An initial mistake is to incorporate the word "nursing" in the name of this corps, its functions can in no case extend beyond "first aid."

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