

Nursing Echoes.



At a conference held last week at the offices of the Queen Victoria Institute for Nurses between the Council of the Institute and representatives of the Affiliated County Nursing Associations, Mr. Harold Boulton presided. The subjects discussed included the simplification of the examination for midwives, the medical inspection of children in elementary schools, and the best way of dealing with defects disclosed by such inspection. In view of the new development of district nurses' work consequent upon the Children Act, 1908, it was stated that in many cases the Boards of Guardians were approaching the local nursing associations in various parts of the country for the appointment of district nurses to act as infant protection visitors, to see that the provisions of the Act were carried out in the cases of boarded-out children.

It was stated that in Cumberland the County Council had provided an Assistant to the County Superintendent of the Nursing Association, a part of whose duties it was to visit a school with the medical men, and to attend to the children in the districts where there were no local nursing associations. In this way the whole county was covered, the county nurses having undertaken to do the work wherever possible. Arrangements of a similar nature had also been made between the local education authorities in Cheshire, Somerset, Staffordshire, Sussex, and part of Derbyshire, and the County Nursing Associations for the assistance of the nurses, these arrangements being of mutual financial advantage to the education authorities and the nursing associations.

A small committee has been formally appointed to formulate a scheme to promote closer union between the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute and the Metropolitan District Nursing Associations by the formation of a representative body.

In the course of her evidence before the Poor Law Commission, the first volume of whose minutes of evidence has now been issued as a Blue-book, Miss Ina Stansfeld, an Assistant Inspector for the Metropolis under the Local Government Board, discussed the advantages and disadvantages of out-door uniform for

nurses. "Out-door uniform is not compulsory," she said, "but I should like to see out-door uniforms entirely abolished. Twenty years ago it was a protection to nurses in the streets, but now it is by no means a protection, rather the reverse; it is worn by women of all classes, of all grades of character; by women who are trained, by women who are not trained; by little nurse-maids who earn about £8 a year, who, in extraordinarily loud costumes, dirty cap strings, holey gloves, and untidy boots, take out their mistresses' babies. It is abused.

"Some years ago I met a Society woman, who told me she visited a hospital once a week, and she went on to say that she always went in nurse's dress, because she thought it more sympathetic and suitable. Only last week I heard of a nurse who lent her uniform to a girl friend to be photographed in. I suppose it is considered to be picturesque, but anyone who lives in the streets of London, as I do, and sees the abuse to which it is put, would wish that all institutions would beg their nurses not to wear it, and that no board of guardians should ever think of providing outdoor uniform."

Mrs. Webb, a member of the Commission, remarked, "May I suggest that one great advantage of the uniform is the question of expense? You can look a charming person on £10 a year in uniform, but you cannot look at all distinguished and nice under £50 or £60 a year out of uniform."

Miss Stansfeld replied, "There is the washing of those white strings," and, in answer to the Rev. Russell Wakefield, she agreed that the fact of nurses looking charming added to the possibility of the uniform being abused.

In the *Weekly Dispatch* Miss Lückes, Matron of the London Hospital, expressing her agreement with Miss Stansfeld's views on borrowed plumes, incidentally, and quite unintentionally we are sure, makes out a very strong case for State Registration. "In all the great hospitals and reputable nursing institutions," she said, "the social standing of the nurse is as high as it ever was. Yet the respect paid to a nurse in uniform in the streets is much less nowadays than it used to be. That is because of the abuse of the uniform. Certain people assume a familiarity with a uniformed nurse, which, of course, is highly offensive to a refined woman." While speaking in high terms of many private nursing institutions, Miss Lückes referred to some places, "where in the morning a girl is scrubbing the area steps, and in the afternoon she is dressed

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