

the homes of the poor, reduction in infantile mortality, and the realisation of the duties of motherhood. The chairman referred to the difficulty of getting the feckless mothers, whom it was specially desirable to reach, to attend, and the speaker admitted the difficulty. A great effort was made to instruct the mothers in the training of character, and to discriminate in dealing with various characters. She mentioned that the Women's Imperial Health Association is preparing a cinematograph which will be a valuable means of instruction.

Miss Marsters, Superintendent of the Paddington and Marylebone District Nursing Association, read a valuable paper on the co-operation of charities; and, in discussing the various forms of help said that it might be money which was needed, but personal service was sometimes more valuable. Societies dealing with relief in sickness—exclusive of religious work—had an income of over ten millions a year. She emphasised the danger of over-lapping. She instanced a case to which a district nurse was called in by the doctor, in which one lady visitor was trying to get the patient into a home for the dying, and another benevolent person endeavoured to secure his admission to a convalescent home. The patient was an unsuitable case for either, and the doctor refused to sign both certificates.

Another consumptive widow, whose husband died of the disease, refused all treatment, and infected two children. She was receiving assistance from Church of England, Roman Catholic, and Baptist charities, as well as from a private individual.

Other causes of failure to assist cases of distress effectively were that all the resources at command were not tapped, and neglect to provide against sickness. A district nurse must acquaint herself with all the agencies in her district from which she could get relief for her patients. Again, in the case of a man, old employers might be approached, and work secured for the wife, if the children could be provided for.

#### THE NOTIFICATION OF BIRTHS ACT.

Miss Agnes Tyson (Superintendent of the Barry District Nursing Association), sent a paper, which was read by Miss Blair, on the working of the above Act in Barry, which is a town practically free from slums. The adoption of the above Act resulted in the immediate reduction of the infantile death rate. The nurses, who acted as inspectors, were well received, and their instructions looked forward to and acted upon.

Miss Marsters inquired whether the visiting, in connection with the Act, was carried out, as a rule, by nurses or sanitary inspectors; and it transpired that in one town it is in the hands of men sanitary inspectors; also that in Sunderland, every encouragement is given to notification, and the first person to send in the notification of birth receives a shilling.

#### DISTRICT NURSING.

Miss Buckle, Superintendent of the Brighton

District Nursing Association, said that the district nurse is no longer a luxury, and has come to stay. She emphasised the importance of a post-graduate course for district nurses, and said the fully-trained hospital nurse, who struggles on without it, and afterwards seeks training, finds the difference it makes to her. For instance, she is apt to despair, when provided only with a tin basin with a hole in it, and does not realize that it can be stopped with soap. The trained district nurse also finds time to learn something of family conditions, by noticing the memorial cards on the walls, the certificate of membership of a friendly society, and the school prizes.

If a nurse sets out to have an easy time she will not find her vocation in district nursing. But she will have great opportunities of useful work, in a life of happiness, and much service.

The Chairman said that the keynote of the papers had been that of personal and national service. The same service was demanded of private and hospital nurses, for, from great ladies downwards, there was ignorance of the laws of health. Moral instruction could appropriately be given by nurses to girls and mothers. There is, she said, no curtain between us and the hidden sorrows and sins of humanity; and we realise that a great deal of trouble is caused by ignorance. Trained nurses, however, do not always rise to a sense of their responsibility, in raising the physical and moral standard, and educating people as to the national burden of the feeble-minded. It has been well asked, what is the good of giving liberty to those who cannot use it.

(To be continued.)

## LEGAL MATTERS.

### BURNING A PATIENT.

At a special court recently held in Castlebar before Mr. James Roache, R.M., Ellen Kilcoyne, an attendant in the Castlebar District Lunatic Asylum, was charged with inflicting grievous bodily harm on a patient in the institution by burning her with a red hot poker.

Almost incredible evidence was given by Penelope Reilly, a female attendant in the asylum, who was in charge of the observation ward on the night of March 18th, when the alleged assault occurred, two other attendants having to visit each dormitory every hour during the night. The witness stated that, with an attendant named Bridget Walsh, she was in the observation ward about 4 a.m., when the accused brought the patient to the lavatory, heated a poker red hot, and, subsequently took it out to the lavatory, and told the patient to open her mouth while she put the poker down her throat. The patient implored her not to burn her, and the witness also expostulated, but nevertheless Ellen Kilcoyne laid the poker on the patient, who was at that time quite naked, twice on her left thigh, and once on her abdomen. The woman implored the witness

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