

own. The Medical Officer of Health for Sheffield wrote:—"It is not a statutory qualification of Health Visitors or Women Inspectors that they should be trained nurses, but I am of opinion that a nurse's training is the most valuable training for a Woman Inspector or Health Visitor."

MOTHERS' WELCOMES OR SCHOOL OF MOTHERCRAFT.

This movement had undoubtedly been the outcome of the valuable investigation work done by the Health Visitors. Not only the ignorance of the mothers, but bad sanitary conditions in the home were militating factors against the rearing of healthy infants. It was France which first set the example to all civilised countries of giving greater care to the welfare of the infant population. In 1907 the St. Pancras School for Mothers was opened, the first of its kind to be established in London. There were now 160 Schools for Mothers, and Infant Consultation Centres, at work throughout the United Kingdom. The majority were worked by voluntary agencies; only about twelve were run by the municipalities.

FACTORY NURSES.

Many of the large factories, said Miss Kent, maintained a staff of trained nurses for their employees. For the purpose of the present paper she had visited two of them, the Lever Soap Factory, and Cadbury's Cocoa Factory. In connection with the former there was a well equipped hospital in the grounds, besides many dispensaries for dealing with minor ailments, also a well-organised St. John's Ambulance Brigade. Organisation in connection with the second factory named was very similar, and equally satisfactory. Nurses as well as employees were well trained and well paid.

COTTAGE AND VILLAGE NURSES.

It was regrettable to report that a system of nursing had been established in various parts of England by which the poor were nursed by women who had undergone a very short period of training. They were primarily midwives, and were recruited from the same class as their patients. The organisation of nurses for the poor in rural districts through these "Cottage Nurses," and "Village Nurses," was to be deplored as an undesirable substitute for the fully trained nursing which should be provided for the sick poor.

THE NURSES' SOCIAL UNION.

The Nurses' Social Union was founded some twelve years ago. Its original purpose was to be of assistance to nurses working singly in lonely districts, but it was subsequently felt that the Union must widen its basis, as there was never more need than to-day for nurses to meet together to discuss the social questions with which they were so intimately concerned, for the good of the community whose servants they were. For this reason the co-operation of all branches of the profession was invited that they might acquire from one another a knowledge of the needs of the nation in respect of health.

In conclusion, Miss Kent said that she had only been able, in the time available, to touch on the principal activities of trained nurses in the United Kingdom in connection with their social service. The National Council of Nurses advocated further extension—in all relations of public health—of the thoroughly trained and skilled work of the professional nurse. Its members further desired that only the highest standard of nursing should be provided for the sick of all classes, and looked forward hopefully to the day when a Ministry of Health should be established in all civilised countries to promote and conserve the inalienable right of Life to Health.

A GROUP OF GERMAN PAPERS.

THE NURSE AS INSPECTOR OF ORPHANS.

Sister Martha Oesterlen, Inspector of Orphans, of Stuttgart, said that as soon as they were declared eligible as assistant inspectors of the poor, women from all parts of the Empire offered their gratuitous services. Their work was of incalculable value, but in the large towns it had become evident that the number of honorary members was inadequate, and must be supplemented by paid workers, who would work hand in hand with the honorary members. In Stuttgart the suggestion came from the latter, and already two female inspectors and one assistant had been appointed by the Town Council. They were answerable to and received their orders from the Board of Guardians of the Poor. Their duties comprised the supervision of illegitimate children and orphans, both boys and girls; also, when the Court of Ward deemed it expedient, children of divorced parents, or those whose safety was endangered by a stepfather; further, children who were boarded out, whose foster-parents, in Württemberg, could not without a licence take any child under 13 years (in the other federal states the age limit was 6); also girls from reformatories and other homes who had been placed with families, allowed to return to their parents on trial, or who had entered service, the law requiring that they be kept under supervision. Besides this, the female inspectors were expected to examine cases on application from other boards. Their work comprised 5-6 hours' visiting, and 2-3 hours' office work for the registering of cases, the drawing up of reports, more or less detailed, and the consideration of the advisability of granting licences to applicants for foster-children.

The work was divided into districts, and it was possible to pay 350 visits a month. Five to six hundred children might be carefully inspected, but a larger number would endanger the thoroughness of the work. This work brought its own rewards, and though there was much that saddened, one found amongst the poor noble souls and often heroic deeds. In a workman's family where there were many mouths to feed, a little child might be found being fed and cared for, for no other reason than because the people were fond of it.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)