

has the effect of keeping Poor Law nurses as a class apart is to be deprecated, as it accentuates the artificial distinction between nurses trained in general hospitals and Poor Law infirmaries. Poor Law nurses will never take their rightful position in the nursing world until they are registered, by a legally constituted authority, on their merits, side by side with their colleagues from general hospitals.

Other Government Departments concerned with nursing are the Board of Education, under which the increasing number of nurses working in elementary schools are organized, the Home Office under which a certain amount of nursing is done either by wardresses, or in some instances by trained nurses. The unskilful treatment of many women prisoners in connection with the punitive system of forcible feeding, employed by the Government in the case of political prisoners on hunger strike, has aroused wide-spread horror and indignation where the facts are known. It is stated on high medical authority that it bears no sort of relation to the artificial feeding employed in hospitals and asylums. While it could be no part of a trained nurse's duty to assist at the enforcement of punitive measures, the need for the employment of thoroughly trained nurses as matrons in prison infirmaries and to supervise the general health of the prisoners, on a much larger scale than at present, is an urgent necessity.

A limited number of nurses for British Protectorates are selected through the Foreign Office, and there is a Nursing Board at the India Office which investigates applications and interviews candidates for Queen Alexandra's Nursing Service in India. Nurses for service in Government Hospitals, and as private nurses in Crown Colonies are appointed on the recommendation of the Colonial Nursing Association.

FEVER NURSES ASSOCIATION.

The Fever Nurses Association has continued to hold examinations for nurses in infectious work, and to judge from the number of those who enter for it, this opportunity of securing evidence of competence must be appreciated by nurses in infectious hospitals.

MENTAL NURSING.

Mental nursing is generally held to refer to the care of the certified insane, but to proceed along modern lines of teaching, which insist that prevention is better than cure, it should begin long before the disease is so far advanced. As asylums are no longer merely

houses of detention for the insane, but modern hospitals for their active treatment, so if the numbers of those entering asylums are to be reduced, patients with incipient symptoms must be treated and nursed, and hospitals must be prepared to deal not only with border-line cases but those in much earlier stages.

The passing of the Mental Deficiency Act should do much to draw attention, and disseminate knowledge in regard to the whole question of mental diseases which range from acute insanity to feeble-mindedness. Mental nursing demands the very highest type of nurses, and we hope that women will increasingly realize the need for their services in this responsible branch of work and the scope and interest it affords.

In this branch of nursing the Medico-Psychological Association's Examination is the recognized test. Nothing indeed is more significant of the need felt for an independent test than the way in which such examinations have been instituted for nurses in different branches of work—mental, fever, Poor Law, midwifery. The exclusion of general nursing from a central examination test is thus emphasised, and its claims for a standard of efficiency cannot be much longer ignored.

PRIVATE NURSING.

In no branch of work is it more essential that nurses should be competent and trustworthy and in none are the public better served, or worse exploited. Many private nurses are highly trained, efficient, invaluable in the houses of the public; but the opportunities afforded for exploitation have also attracted the attention of the semi-trained and incompetent, and those who farm out their services.

DISTRICT NURSING.

As the importance of the part played by the district nurse as a health missionary, as well as in nursing those who are sick, is more and more recognized, the necessity for the employment of women of good education and mental ability, as well as thorough professional training, becomes increasingly evident. The standard of the Queen's Nurses is that which should be invariably adopted. It is not to be regarded as a counsel of perfection, desirable but unattainable, but as the adequate one.

The lives of the poor are too valuable to those dependent upon them, and to the nation at large, to be trifled with, and if philanthropic persons purport to offer to them skilled nursing, it should be of the most efficient quality.

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