

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
THE NURSING RECORD

EDITED BY MRS BEDFORD FENWICK

No. 1,356

SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 1914.

Vol. LII.

EDITORIAL.

THE PANEL NURSE.

Among the charms of nursing as a profession are the unexpected and varied openings it affords, offering—once the general training has been passed through—opportunities for the development of individual tastes and talents to an almost unlimited extent.

It is within the memory of many nurses still in practice that the only branches open to them early in their career were institution, district, and private nursing, and the work was hard, and the pay meagre, which ever branch they decided to adopt. Now fresh opportunities are continually developing. School nursing, probably still in its infancy, is rapidly increasing, and bids fair to be as integral a part of our social system as district nursing. Health visiting, tuberculosis nursing, and many other branches are all competing for thoroughly trained nurses with special qualifications. The latest opening for nurses is that of insurance work both as inspectors for approved societies, and as nurses for the insured sick, and before long the panel nurse will in all probability be just as well known, and sought after as the panel doctor, for with good nursing, both preventive and curative, the incidence and duration of sickness will be greatly decreased and shortened.

In all branches of nursing it is remarkable how those interested claim that their particular branch needs the highest type of well qualified women; which merely affords an illustration of the fact that the personal, educational, and professional qualifications of all nurses cannot be too high. Certainly the "panel nurse" is no exception to the rule that only the best are good enough for the work. Under the medical profession the conservation of the health of the workers of the nation will rest in her

hands, and both to the community and to the individual the health of the breadwinner is a most precious asset. To carry out her mission satisfactorily the panel nurse must work along two lines. (1) She must constantly seek for opportunities for instructing insured persons in the laws of health, whether by classes, or otherwise, so that the general standard of good health may be raised, and (2) she must render such skilled and devoted service to the insured sick that they may be restored to health, and to the ranks of wage earners at the earliest possible date.

Nursing under the National Insurance Act would have the charm that the nurse would be able to settle in a permanent home; for her usefulness would greatly depend upon the trust and appreciation of those among whom she works, and this takes time to gain. Trust when once given is given loyally, and permanently, and therefore prolonged residence in a locality is desirable if the greatest good is to be achieved.

The standard of the panel nurse should be that required of Queen's Nurses, namely the three years' certificate of a good nurse-training-school, and a further six months' special training in sanitation, hygiene, and district nursing. In addition, many Queen's Nurses hold the certificate of the Central Midwives Board and this again is a most useful qualification for a panel nurse. If the nursing of the insured sick is to be effective no lower standard must be permitted. Whether in town or country, nurses must be equally well qualified, for sickness is no respecter of persons.

In country districts, at the present time, women with very inadequate qualifications are often employed as nurses by local committees, but while the poor have no option but to accept the gifts of private philanthropy, a State Service must be a standardized Service.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)