

Royal British Nurses' Association.

(Incorporated by  Royal Charter.)

THIS SUPPLEMENT BEING THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE CORPORATION.

AN EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY WITH THE KING AND QUEEN.

The General Council, on behalf of all the Members of the Corporation, forwarded to their Majesties an expression of deep sympathy on the death of His Royal Highness Prince John.

V.A.D. SCHOLARSHIP SCHEME.

A member has asked for our criticism on a list of the various branches of training which, under the Scholarship Scheme of the V.A.D. Department at Devonshire House, Members of the Detachments are to receive. It serves to emphasise the chaotic ideas which exist as to the standards of qualification for various classes of nursing and preventive work. For Physical Culture, for instance, a term of three years' study is required; but Infant Welfare Workers and Health Visitors are understood to be able to acquire all the experience necessary in six months. Yet no amount of physical culture, of however remedial a type, will make up for faulty conditions in the home, and mistakes in connection with the rearing of children, which are responsible for so many individuals being compelled to go through life crippled to a greater or less extent by physical incapacity.

Curative treatment for such defectiveness, either by medical intervention, by physical culture, or by any other means, will never, so to speak, pick up the stitches dropped in the earliest years of childhood through ignorance, in one respect or another, on the part of the mothers and those entrusted by the authorities with branches of public health work. The contentment, south of the Tweed, with low standards of qualification is one of the greatest dangers which we have to face as regards the future of the nation, and the lack of any standard whatever as to the qualifications of women health workers is not the least serious aspect

of this same attitude of contentment towards unstandardised work, on the part of the authorities and the public.

Only to-day, one of our members brought to our notice the case of a Health Visitor who was "promoted" to the post of Sanitary Inspector. In her first appointment she was dealing with all the manifold aspects of hygiene as it affects that most complicated human mechanism, the physical body of the child; dealing with all the manifold gradations from the normal, with all the manifold ramifications of such gradations in the making of the race. In her second appointment her work was doubtless important, but why could she command a better status, and a higher salary, when she left the more vital and human aspects of public health work, to confine her attention to such matters as cubic space, drainage, water supplies, &c.?

To return to the question of training, we think that the promoters of the Scholarship Scheme are adopting a far more serious responsibility than they realise, in proposing to provide such a low standard of qualification for those to be entrusted, in a greater or less degree, with the care of the nation's child life. Very few well-educated and wealthy mothers would be content to entrust their healthy, warmly clothed and well-fed children to the care of a woman with four or six months' experience; and yet people with such short experience it is suggested shall teach poor mothers and shall advise them as to feeding and care of their children. What can they understand of all the preventive treatment called for in relation to child-life, and where will they acquire the knowledge to enable them to detect, at their earliest stages, symptoms which claim the immediate attention of a medical man, if serious suffering or at least incapacity is to be avoided? Surely, no branch of public work ever called more urgently for high standards of efficiency than does that connected with the health of the people. What this standard should be

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)