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EDITORIAL.

NURSES FOR VILLAGE WORK.

The question of the supply of nurses for village work was recently the subject of a discussion at a Conference at Huntingdon, convened by the Lord Lieutenant of the County, and promoted by the County Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Moss Blundell.

The effort, as outlined at the above-mentioned Conference, to give "suitable young women a brief course of training in the essentials of nursing, without becoming qualified nurses, but which would give them sufficient knowledge to carry on village nursing," is as out of date as the Lady Bountiful, by whom the village nurse has always been specially beloved. The business motor car now enables an efficiently trained nurse to cover a wide area, and we hope that in the future the services of experienced registered nurses, working from convenient centres, may be made available by this means to the sick in all parts of the country, through the agency of the Health Department of the County.

We learn that the scheme propounded at the Conference by the Lord Lieutenant of Huntingdon—to give young women some months' experience successively in a sanatorium, a Union Infirmary, the County Hospital and a lying-in hospital, the whole course to last about two years—has met with criticism everywhere. It was turned down by the Peterborough Guardians, who hold that a half-trained or badly trained nurse is undesirable, and their staff is not sufficient to give a satisfactory training; the St. Ives Guardians consider the nature of the cases in their Infirmary would not give the trainees the experience desired, they would only learn to care for the aged sick and the dying; the Fever Hospital authorities consider fever training unnecessary for these workers, because fever cases in villages would at once

be removed to hospital; and the Huntingdon County Hospital refuses to have anything to do with these pupils on special terms, and will only accept them for three years' training as ordinary probationers. It is justifiably argued that to accept them on other terms would be unfair to other nurses, and the whole effect of the scheme as propounded would be to lower the status of the nursing profession at a moment when great efforts are being made to raise it. It would, moreover, be unfair to the wage earners in rural districts to supply them with partially trained women. Nothing contributes more to quick recovery than skilled and experienced nursing, and, while quick recovery is desirable for all classes, it is of supreme importance to the wage earner, whose earning capacity and means of self support is dependent upon his health. We congratulate the hospital and Poor Law authorities on their attitude in this matter. It is a most hopeful sign of the times.

The Draft Syllabus of Lectures and Demonstrations, and Training in General Nursing, issued by the General Nursing Council for England and Wales, indicates the standard of knowledge which will be expected by it in the future of those undertaking the nursing of the sick, and we hope that County Medical Officers of Health will acquaint themselves with this Syllabus, and organise the Public Health Nursing in the Counties for the health of which they are responsible on lines which will enable the nurses to take an honourable position in the County as Registered Nurses. To encourage young women to spend eighteen months in acquiring a smattering of nursing—for six months of the proposed two years will, presumably, be spent in gaining the certificate of the Central Midwives Board, which has a legal significance and value—is to mislead them at the outset of their career, and is a very serious responsibility to assume.

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