

his nurse, Miss Mary Dempster, in recognition of her care and devotion during the last years of his life. Miss Dempster, when a member of the Registered Nurses' Society, was selected to attend Colonel Villiers, and remained with him for many years until his death, which is most deeply lamented by all who knew him.

At the Annual Council and General Meeting of the National Poor Law Officers' Association the following resolution was received from the South Yorkshire Branch, viz. :—"That this Branch views with great concern the practice in some Unions of appointing Matrons in charge of Institutions, and requests the National Executive to urge the Minister of Health to refuse to sanction such arrangements, on the ground that it debarb male officers from legitimate promotion, and tends to increase the present state of unemployment in the country."

The President said this matter had been referred to the Indoor Officers Committee.

There is a very growing determination amongst male officials to exclude women from positions they consider themselves qualified to fill. The special qualifications of women and their right to work and preferment must be kept in view by public bodies—at the same time we are entirely in sympathy with eliminating without mercy the "pocket money" woman who infests many offices—and is paid a high salary for work which could be better done by real wage-earners.

The District Committees of the county, and the Forfarshire Education Authority are to cooperate in the matter of nursing services. The Authority's school nurses are to act as health visitors under the District Committee, the Authority to appoint a minimum of four nurses, to be allocated to areas to be arranged. The Education Authority are to pay three-fifths of their salaries, and the County Council two-fifths.

Princess Mary paid a visit to Birmingham on Monday last, where she attended a great rally of Girl Guides, paid a visit to the Government Instructional Factory, the Infant Welfare Centre, and the Scenic Fair being held in Bingley Hall in support of the Three Counties Local Centre of the College of Nursing, Ltd. A number of hospital Matrons were presented and a tour made of the stalls, and purses presented by thirty children.

THE HISTORY OF ANTISEPTICS, AND THE LESSON TO BE LEARNT.

Dr. Abernethy Willett gave the final lecture of the Post-graduate Course for Midwives, arranged by the General Lying-in Hospital, at the Midwives' Institute on the evening of May 27th, and told the story of their discovery—which, even to those who know it well, is always full of interest—in a charming and graphic manner. He impressed upon his hearers that they should be able to give the reason for their use of antiseptics in their practice. It would not do to say "Because I was told to." That was all very well for undergraduates, but not for graduates, who must be ready to meet cranks and sceptics with logical grounds for their belief.

Similar causes produced similar results, and they should be able to state what happened before the discovery of antiseptics, and what happened after. There were three stages in any great discovery. Firstly, someone began to question whether the present procedure was right; secondly, someone began to prove that it was not right; thirdly, the new theory was put to the test by experience, and there was the crucial experiment which proved or disproved it.

That was what happened in regard to antiseptics. Before about 1850 there was a kind of hopelessness of public feeling. The cause of illnesses was not understood, and all illness was looked upon as "an Act of God." If people lived in the marsh they were likely to have malaria. If a woman had a baby she was likely to have puerperal fever.

In 1845, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, of Boston, began to question the theory, then generally accepted, that puerperal fever was an infectious disease, spread as scarlet fever and small-pox were spread. He pointed out that infectious diseases started from a centre, spread round and round. He argued that if puerperal fever had a similar origin it should spread in the same way. Yet he found it did not do so. Then he made a map of a locality, and found that in certain streets there was case after case of puerperal fever, while other streets were free. Then he ascertained what doctors and nurses attended these lying-in cases, and found that the cases of puerperal fever were confined to the practice of certain doctors and nurses, while cases attended by others remained free from infection.

He therefore argued, "You may say you are satisfied that puerperal fever is an ordinary infectious disease. It isn't. There is quite sufficient evidence to make you hesitate to accept that theory." And he was very clear in proving that puerperal fever had a different origin.

The next stage was when Semmelweiss (in 1846-1847) demonstrated in Vienna that the accepted theory was untenable. Against his theories it may be urged that Semmelweiss was an eccentric genius who died in a lunatic asylum, and that his teaching, therefore, could not carry the same

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