

Nursing Echoes.

\*.\* All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith.

THE Report of the House of Lords' Committee was published last Thursday, and is most interesting reading. My first idea is that,



so far as the Hospitals go, some suggestions made by the Committee are impracticable. In fact, the idea of an eight hours' day for Nurses is, I believe, visionary, and quite impossible of fulfilment. The work might be, and must be, lightened by increasing the number of trained workers; but the time cannot be lessened below nine

and a-half to ten hours a day without running a very serious risk of neglecting the patients. The following summary of the Nursing in Poor Law Institutions is very interesting:—

(436) NURSING reform has made great advances in the Poor Law Infirmaries as well as elsewhere. The employment of unskilled pauper Nurses, which used to be the rule, has now become a rare exception, though they are to be found in the sick wards of the Workhouses where a large proportion of the less severe cases are still retained. Many of the Infirmary Nurses have gone through a regular Hospital training. About one-half of the Matrons, however, even now are women who are not regularly-trained Nurses; the appointments are made by the guardians at their own discretion;\* but it appears that of late a trained woman has always been selected.

(437) COMPLAINT is made that the Matrons are placed too much under the control of the Medical Superintendent, who has power to interfere in the Nursing arrangements at all points. By courtesy and goodwill, it is said, the system has worked tolerably well; but it is urged that it is a wrong system, and is likely to lead to serious conflict between the Infirmary authorities. This view was pressed by the Workhouse Nursing Association upon the Local Government Board, which, however, was unwilling to take the ultimate control out of the hands of the Superin-

\* All appointments are subject to the sanction of the Local Government Board, but it seems that no general order has been issued respecting the qualifications of a Matron.

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tendent, though it was admitted that the Matron ought rarely to be interfered with in the management of her own department. Dr. Bridges thought the existing arrangement satisfactory, provided there was an ordinary amount of tact on both sides, and the Superintendents of some of the Infirmaries spoke in favour of it.

(438) HIGH testimony was paid to the efficiency of the Nursing Staff in some of the new Infirmaries. Dr. Bridges, the Medical Inspector of the Local Government Board, estimated that about one-fifth of the Nurses now employed are Hospital trained. A portion of the staff at some Infirmaries certainly appears to be deficient in this respect; but it seems usual at some Infirmaries to require that every Nurse should have had a certain amount of training in a Hospital. Some of the Infirmaries train their own Nurses, and it was hoped that this system would be further extended, so that large numbers of Infirmary-trained Nurses might be sent out for general service. The Medical Superintendent of one Infirmary had hope of being allowed to take Probationers.

(439) THE number employed is very much less in proportion to the number of patients than is the case in the Hospitals. The whole number of Nurses in the Infirmaries was stated to be eight hundred and eighty-eight;\* in the Marylebone Infirmary there were sixty-six Nurses among seven hundred beds. Regard being had, however, to the chronic character of the cases, it does not appear to be thought that the Infirmaries are seriously under-nursed; and it was said that the Nurses were less overworked than those in the Hospitals, that their health was good, and that they were generally content with their position and treatment. The hours and matters of routine appear to be generally similar to those in other Hospitals. A Nurse leaving after a year's service receives a testimonial as to her capabilities.

(440) THE wages of Infirmary Nurses rise to £30; there appears to be no difficulty in getting a sufficient supply of them, or at least of good Probationers.

(441) NURSES trained in the large Hospitals are apt, it is said, to find the Infirmaries dull, and therefore there is some difficulty in getting and

\* In 1886 the total number was 111.

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