instituted. One of these, the Benevolent Society, is of interest to the development of district nursing in Douglas. This Methodist Charity, instituted in 1794, was for the benefit of people of every denomination and concentrated on help for the sick, distressed, the utterly destitute 'strangers', without friends or helpers.

District visitors were appointed who had to be of good character, capable of instructing those they visited in the ways of "righteousness and earnestly recommend cleanliness". They were expected to visit the people in their area of Douglas at least twice a week, to report their work to the Committee every Thursday evening at the Methodist Chapel. At these meetings each case was discussed and arrangements made for further assistance.(6)

One of these visitors was the well known 'Nelly Brennan'. She was an active member of this Society until a few weeks before her death in 1859.

> "A family of seven all suffering from typhus was brought to her attention. No one dared to help, fearing the infection. Nelly took care of the five children, cleaned their rooms, refreshed their wasted forms by baths and clean linen, procured food for them, lighted their fires, cooked their food. When they were well enough she found kind friends who got the older children employment and supported the younger ones. The father and mother had both died shortly after her first visit. She had difficulty in finding someone to help her to remove the parents from the house to the churchyard. She acted as mother, nurse, servant and benefactress all in one."(7)

After the cholera epidemic of 1832-33, a House of Industry was built in Douglas. A dispensary had been started in 1822, financed by the St Mathew's Charity and other donations. In 1840 a surgeon was appointed to take over the work of the dispensary, visit the poor in their own homes and attend to the sick in the House of Industry. The dispensary was added to the General Hospital in Fort Street, Douglas, when it was opened in 1850.

According to the rules, the house surgeon had to visit the patients in the hospital morning and evening, attend the dispensary from nine to eleven in the morning, and visit the poor in their own homes if they were unable to come to the hospital.(8)

The matron was in charge of the hospital, and held the keys. Although not in the rules, she visited the sick in their own homes.(9)

In 1877 a Commission was set up to look into the medical aid and relief of the poor. The Report of the Commission noted that the General Hospital in Fort Street had accommodation for twenty four patients. In epidemics of infectious diseases there were special arrangements for financial aid from government funds. There was a building in the hospital grounds for these patients. The nonconformists looked after their own sick and poor. The Benevolent Society mapped the town into seven districts with a visitor