

NURSING ECHOES.

* * * Communications (duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith) are specially invited for these columns.

THE question of the day in the nursing world is now—"How many nurses have joined the Pension Fund?" Rumour is rife with microscopic figures, but of course no one really can know except the Council of the Fund. If rumour is right of course nothing will be allowed to leak out, but if many are joining it is quite certain the figures will soon be published *pour encourager les autres*. There is one thing I can never understand—Why on earth should it be called a *pension* fund? Pensions are superannuation allowances given for services rendered, whether to the State or public bodies or private individuals. They are not pensions in the general acceptance of the word if they are paid for by the recipient, but are only what insurance offices call "deferred annuities."

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THE point of the whole difficulty, as I have said before, is that only a certain number of nurses need pensions. There is not the smallest doubt of that. But these are the very people who can least afford to pay for the annuities which this National Fund offers. And there is doubtless a larger number of nurses who would be glad to secure sick pay, but under this scheme they cannot obtain any allowance in illness unless they subscribe also for a pension which many of them do not want at all. Altogether it has long been a mystery where the 1,500 nurses are who, we were told three months ago, were living in hourly watchfulness for the appearance of the Pension Fund.

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I TOLD the story of the nurse who was prepared to pay ten shillings a year till she was fifty to get a pound a week for ever afterwards. I expect that she represented the feelings of, say, 1,499 other people, who must by this time have found that it would be charming to get an annuity on such terms, but not business-like or National Pension Fund-like to expect it. I have just heard of the reflections of another upon the subject. She had inquired diligently, and therefore was probably numbered among the fifteen hundred. She duly received a form, which she was directed to fill up and return to the secretary, binding herself to subscribe for a pension. She sorrowfully found that, to get fifteen pounds a year or five shillings and ninepence a week at the age of fifty, she would have to pay quarterly till then about four shillings more than her whole salary amounted to; and, as she sadly and slowly deposited the prospectus in the middle of the fire, was heard plaintively to murmur—"Blessed is them that expects but little, for it's blessed little they'll get!"

OUR poor cross contemporary this week is solemnly denouncing our "truly feminine inconsistency," and, considering the melancholy monotone of its remarks, appropriately signs the little annotation "Diogenes." The burden of its wail is that *The Lancet* and this journal "hate the founder"—so it is to be a small *f* in future—"of the fund so cordially that they will not allow any work he does to prosper, if they can help it." This is charmingly, deliciously egotistic, and, of course, argument under such circumstances is hopeless. I can only humbly plead that I do not "hate the founder"—without the capital—one little tiny bit; and why should I, or Mr. Editor either? Humiliating confession to make though it be, we have neither of us to our knowledge ever seen him, nor spoken to him, nor in fact ever heard of him, till his paper appeared, and, like "Beecham's Pills" or "Sunlight Soap," filled whole columns with one name.

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I CHRONICLED in our first number the appointment of Miss Philippa Hicks as lady superintendent of the Children's Hospital, Great Ormond Street. I have just heard that, on leaving King's College Hospital, she was presented with a very handsome tea service and tea table, by the sisters and nurses, and by the special probationers with two well-known prints, "Disappointment" and "Expectation." From all accounts the expectations of what Miss Hicks will do for Great Ormond Street are not likely to end in disappointment. I am told that Miss Peddy, who was trained at St. Thomas's, has been appointed to succeed Miss Hicks as assistant matron at King's College.

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MISS GODOLPHIN-OSBORNE, whose appointment I noticed last week, has been also presented with a tea service and a very handsome oak tea tray, mounted in silver, by the nursing staff of St. Bartholomew's, as evidence of the admiration and affection in which she is universally held. Much amusement was created, I hear, by her characteristic request that the tea-cups should be selected so that they could be drunk out of, and not after the fashion of the exaggerated thimbles now so much in vogue. The print called "A Scratch Pack" was included in the testimonial, evidently a delicate reference to Miss Osborne's devotion to animals, an example of which I described last week. Miss Bramwell, I am told, has been appointed to fill the vacant position of night superintendent at St. Bartholomew's, to the great delight of everyone, as she is most popular throughout the institution.

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I AM sorry to hear that Miss Lonsdale, the talented authoress and friend of "Sister Dora," is still unable, from ill health, to resume her duties as matron of the Sister Dora Memorial Convalescent Home at

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)