

Nursing Echoes.

* * * *All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.*



OLD Bart's. Nurses will be interested to hear that great improvements are being carried out in their Alma Mater. In the south block all the landings and corridors have had polished floors in alternate light and dark blocks laid down. We ascend to Paget by a new oak staircase. We are inclined to think that in these days of strict asepticism that tessellated landings and corridors would have been

more in accordance with modern hygiene, but from an artistic point of view at least, the effect is excellent. A still greater improvement, perhaps, is that the antiquated bedsteads are to be abolished, and their place taken by white enamelled iron bedsteads; the wards will also be furnished with new lockers. Those nurses who have left St. Bartholomew's, and have since worked in hospitals furnished more in accordance with modern requirements and ideas, will be glad to know that their training school, for which they still retain much affection, is levelling up to present day standards.

* * *
 WE learn with regret that Sister Mary Helen Ellis has recently died at Walthamstow, in her eighty-second year. The Sister belonged to a Roman Catholic order, and worked in the Crimea under Miss Florence Nightingale. Sister Mary Helen was one of the few women who had the honour of receiving recognition from Her Majesty at the Diamond Jubilee, being personally decorated by the Queen with the Order of the Royal Red Cross, for her services in the Crimea.

* * *
 WE are still awaiting a reply from Mr. Conrad Thies, the Secretary of the Royal Free Hospital, to our question, addressed to him last week, asking him to prove his statement that "untruthful paragraphs" concerning the Royal Free Hospital have appeared in the NURSING RECORD. As Mr. Thies has failed to comply with our request, we imagine his very rude and inaccurate letter was written without due deliberation. The tone, however, of the letter printed in our issue of last week from Mr. Thies has the true autocratic official ring, and explains, no doubt, one reason why our hospitals are so badly supported by the large majority of the public. There is very little doubt that the insolent tone and address exemplified in the manner in which

some people conduct the official correspondence of the institutions of which they act as secretaries, is one of the main reasons of hospital unpopularity. The public have a right, at least, to courtesy from those persons who condescend to accept salaries out of public funds, and when we look over our pile of correspondence concerning the internal management of many public institutions, we marvel at the magnanimity of the press in general in refraining from making public much that comes to its editorial knowledge. We should advise Mr. Thies to spend his time in reorganizing many of the internal arrangements of the Royal Free Hospital instead of wasting time and trouble in inditing ambiguous and misleading epistles to the press. For instance, we would advise that regular ward-maids are necessary in the wards if the nursing staff are to be free to attend to the patients in the most efficient manner. Again, twenty minutes for breakfast and supper, and twenty-five minutes for dinner, is not sufficient time for the nursing staff to take those meals with any comfort, and sixteen days' holiday for probationers in their first year is not sufficient rest without subjecting beginners to a physical strain which must inevitably injure their constitutions.

* * *
 It is a subject for congratulation that since the advent of Miss Wedgewood at the Royal Free, the system of sweating the nurses on "the private staff" which flourished right royally until her arrival, has been discontinued. It would be interesting if the Secretary would furnish our readers with the audited accounts of that department whilst it lasted, and show how many thousand (for we know it ran into thousands) pounds were absorbed by the general management, of the money earned by the private nurses, after paying them about one-third of the market value of their skilled services.

* * *
 WE quote from *Asylum News* the following extract from an article by Dr. Clouston, of Morningside, printed in that journal by the courtesy of Messrs. Sampson, Low, Marston, & Co. :—

"It is difficult to get a thorough training in mental nursing, and a general experience of all sorts of cases of mental disease, except in a hospital for the insane; but, on the other hand, it is very easy to spend a long time in the wards of an asylum as an attendant on the insane without being properly trained at all. The inmates of most institutions differ from those of general hospitals in being chronic and incurable in a large proportion. Now, to be all the time in a ward where there are only chronic insane patients, will never give the experience necessary for a good mental nurse, and will not give the stimulus and knowledge necessary to observe, record, and utilize the immense variety of symptoms to be met within recent and curable cases of mental disease. To have had the necessary experience, a nurse must have seen and had responsible charge of many cases of the various forms of insanity, from beginning to end of each case, and must have been instructed by a

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)