

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\* \* All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.



MANY hearts are sore over the break down of the medical arrangements in South Africa, and the Commission has in effect endorsed the statements made by Mr. Burdett-Coutts in his notable letters to the *Times*, and says that "the evils were serious, and ought not to be minimized"; in fact, the main point of difference between Mr. Burdett-Coutts and the Commission now appears to be that the latter hold that nothing in the nature of a scandal occurred, while the former, and most of those who have studied his statements, believe that it did.

It has, however, been reserved to a Bishop of the Established Church, the Bishop of St. Asaph, to pen an article attacking Mr. Burdett-Coutts' veracity and accuracy, and accusing him of misrepresentation, to support, in short, the system of mismanagement and muddle which has prevailed in the medical department during the present war, and, in five pages of the *National Review*, "to go out of his way to set up a new obstacle," to the reformation of these conditions.

It would better beseem a Bishop, as a representative of that Church whose Divine Founder made the healing of the sick so large a part of his work on earth to endeavour to secure better conditions for the sick and wounded rather than to give his episcopal support to inefficiency. An article of this kind penned in the comfortable library of a Bishop's Palace, by a dignitary who did not see for himself, as Mr. Burdett-Coutts was at some pains to see, the actual horrors of the war, may be convincing to those who wish to be convinced, but it will be difficult to persuade the rank and file of the Army of the Diocese of St. Asaph that their Bishop was about his Master's business when he wrote it, or attract them to the Church in which he is an office holder.

Letters have been received from South Africa giving details of Sister Owen's sad death by drowning. It seems that she with another member of the nursing staff and two young doctors were on a

boating expedition, when the boat was upset. Every effort was made to save this poor Sister, but she sank and never rose again. All her colleagues write in the warmest terms of her brightness and goodness.

We notice in the Report of the Royal Berkshire Hospital that it has been unanimously agreed to approach the King with a view to his becoming Patron to the Institution in succession to the late Queen. We hope that before His Majesty signifies his willingness to give this hospital the support of his patronage he will make inquiries into the management of the private nursing department of the institution, and insist that after paying expenses the nurses' earnings shall be their own, and not be transferred to the general support of the hospital. It surely is not right that a Royal County Hospital should appropriate the money earned by hard worked nurses. It is high time this sweating of women was suppressed. The Report states:—

"The whole question of the private nurses has been under the careful consideration of the Board. The number was, some years ago, authorised to be increased to thirty-six, but the result has been as shown, that it has dwindled down to sixteen, and it is found impossible to get more nurses from outside to join. The Board has consequently decided to raise the salaries of the private nurses, which will now commence at £35, and be increased by £5 annually to £45, and they will in addition receive a bonus at the end of each year.

"It has also been proposed to take a separate house for the accommodation of these nurses, it being found that the accommodation in the present house is insufficient for both the Hospital and private nurses, even on the present reduced scale. The matter was referred to a committee, who recommended that the house, No. 24, London Road, should be taken at a rent of £65 a year, and that while the private nurses remain under the direct control of the Matron, the accounts should be kept entirely separate.

"To meet the increased expenditure, the fees for private nurses have been raised from £1 11s. 6d. to £2 2s. per week, which is now the fee charged by nearly all the London institutions, with which Reading, from its proximity to the Metropolis, has to compete. The accounts have hitherto not been kept absolutely separate, as the Nursing Home has been occupied by both hospital and private nurses, but a careful estimate has shown that the alteration, instead of being an expense, will be a source of profit to the Hospital. Even after the payment of all expenses at the Nursing Home this year, a considerable portion of which are for the hospital nurses, it has been found possible to transfer from the private nursing account to the general account a sum of £600 from this fund, which has been accumulated during the past years."

At the recent meeting of the Newark Guardians the porter and portress of the Scarborough Workhouse were unanimously appointed Master and

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