

The Nurses' Co-operation.

THE COST OF LIVING.

Much has been said, and said, we believe, unreasonably, of the cost to the nurses of the Co-operation of living in their charming home in Langham Street. From our own experience of the management of a somewhat similar institution, the Sir Julian Goldsmid Home of Rest at Brighton, where, as in the case of the Howard de Walden Home, there is no rent to pay, we have proved that if every bed were always occupied all the year round, the expenses, under the most economical management could not be estimated at less than £1 per week for each nurse, if the home is to be conducted on refined and comfortable lines. Indeed, expenses of living, of service, and other items, have, of late years, so increased that it has been found necessary, during the past year, to slightly increase the weekly payments of those using the home, so that there may not be so great a disparity between these payments and the actual cost of maintenance.

We think that few nurses realize the cost of living, at the present time. In London at least rates and taxes are just double what they were ten years ago. This not only directly affects householders, but they bear the burden indirectly also, in paying higher prices to tradesmen, who must necessarily recoup themselves for their increased expenses by raising the price of their goods. Again, wages, and therefore the cost of service, have risen considerably of late years, and all this entails a large expenditure.

In the case of the Howard de Walden Home, we have no hesitation in saying that the nurses could not live elsewhere in the same comfort for less than £2 2s. a week, nor would they then be able to rent cupboards, store boxes, or have other conveniences which are available for their use in their home. One advantage which they enjoy should be mentioned, which is that if they are under medical care they can use the sick-room (which contains two beds) without charge. A work-room is also placed at their disposal, with the use of a sewing machine. They have, in short, all the advantages of a well ordered hotel, and more besides.

As for the cost of living, it depends, of course, greatly upon what a nurse orders what her bill amounts to, but the tariff of charges in the restaurant appears to us most moderate. For instance, breakfast, with egg or bacon, may be had for 7d.; dinner, from a hot joint, with two vegetables, and pudding, 1s.; a cup of tea costs 1d., or a teapot to oneself (with milk and sugar), 2½d.; a popular supper is hot soup, and pudding,

which is supplied at 4½d. A great convenience of this restaurant to the nurses is that, although hot meals are only served at certain hours, a substantial cold meal, or tea, is obtainable at any time. Neither need notice be given beforehand by those who make use of the restaurant. Taking all this into consideration, we think that the charges are most moderate when compared with the value received, and that nurses who have experienced the cost of living in rooms, will not be likely to believe those who tell them that the cost of their home is excessive, or who say that they are "herded together" in view of the spacious sitting-rooms, and well-appointed single bedrooms.

Army Medical Reform.

Sir John Tuke recently asked the Secretary of State for War, in the House of Commons, whether the War Office proposes to act on the recommendation of the South African Hospitals' Commission, and appoint a body of experts to enquire into and report on the steps needed to effect reforms in the Royal Army Medical Corps. Lord Stanley replied that the Secretary of State for War was preparing various proposals to submit to a committee of experts in connection with certain reforms in the Royal Army Medical Corps, but the composition of the committee could not be at present stated. This statement is not considered satisfactory by those members who have actively interested themselves in the matter. They desire the immediate appointment of the committee of experts, so that their report may, if possible, be available for discussion before the session closes; and further questions with this object are to be addressed to the representatives of the War Office.

History Repeats Itself.

Lord Kitchener's recent presentation to Mme. Ferrieres, the head of the French Ambulance, in recognition of the assistance rendered by her to wounded British soldiers, recalls a similar case in the Franco-German war. During the campaign of 1870 Mrs. Abingdon Compton acted as interpreter to French prisoners at Wiesbaden, and then did the same kindness for German prisoners of war at Versailles.

Marshal MacMahon presented Mrs. Compton with a medal and a war album at the close of the war, thanking her in the name of "nos pauvres soldats." Her "Farewell Letter," sung by Sims Reeves, was written from the dying words of a soldier who dictated to her his last message to his sweetheart. The proceeds were all handed to the "Sick and Wounded" Fund.

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