

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* * *All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.*



The Secretary of State for India has sanctioned Lady Nurses being allowed leave out of India on medical certificate for six months during tenure of five years' service, such leave counting as service, and their being granted free passage by rail and sea homeward, and by rail alone on the outward journey; also being permitted, when on such leave, to receive an extension for a period not exceeding six months on the recommendation of the Medical Board, and on condition that the period of extension reckon as part of the one year's leave granted by regulation on the completion of a term of five years' service, should they eventually become entitled to such leave.

The Nursing Board at the War Office is getting to work, and we shall await with interest the result of its labours. We are sure that the intention of the new regulations is excellent, and have therefore abstained from commenting upon some obvious flaws because we are hopeful that the whole question of Army Nursing will be approached in a wise and liberal spirit by the Board, which will have the benefit of the advice of experienced Superintendents of Nurses, and that any regulations which prove undesirable will eventually be modified.

The report of the council of the Royal National Pension Fund for Nurses, presented to the general meeting on the 17th inst., supplies the accounts for the twelve months ended December 31st, 1901. The proposals for 1901 numbered 884, and the policies granted were 842. During 1901, 356 policies held by 342 nurses were surrendered, compared with 294 policies surrendered in 1900, the surrender values being £20,462 in the former year, compared with £15,487 in the latter. This increase in the number of withdrawals is partly accounted for by the fact that the figures for 1900 were below the average. At the end of 1901 there were 339 annuitants, holding among them 500 policies, compared with 288 annuitants, holding 398 policies, on December 31st, 1900.

In the sickness assurance branch the proposals

received were 183, against 196 during the previous year, and policies issued 117, against 140 in 1900. The sick pay distributed, however, was considerably in excess of 1900, the precise figures being £1,633 6s. 5d., against £1,446 3s. 4d. The net result of the working of the sickness account for the year is a loss of £200 14s., and forms an unsatisfactory part of the working of the fund. The principal cause of the loss above mentioned is to be found in the fact that there has been a large increase in the number of policyholders who have been receiving sick-pay during the whole year, the number being in fact double what it was, on an average, during the previous three years.

How often one reads of the suicide of private patients "during the temporary absence of the nurse." When one nurse is engaged to look after an insane patient it is her duty to have a substitute when compelled to leave the patient, but when two nurses are engaged, as in the case of the late Mrs. Vezin, the once famous actress, who threw herself out of a window at Margate last week, surely it is their first duty to arrange that either one or the other is in attendance on the patient, and that she is not left alone for a moment. This is a point that a coroner will do well to take into consideration in inquests of this nature.

We are glad to note that Mrs. Hawksley, an energetic member of the Committee of Management of the Royal Hospital, Portsmouth, is vigorously tackling the unsatisfactory conditions which prevail in its out-patient department. We referred to these last week, but it is sufficient to mention that the dressing of out-patients takes place in the ward to which casualty cases are brought and laid down among the waiting men and women, to show that the need for reform is urgent. The Committee who prepared a report on the subject were present when a woman who had tried to commit suicide was brought in half dead, and spoke from personal observation as to the painful effect produced.

At a conference of No. 5 District Association of Workhouse Masters and Matrons, held at Ipswich, "the difficulty and its causes in obtaining nurses in provincial and country workhouse infirmaries and the responsibilities and duties of the Superintendent Nurse were discussed."

Poor Superintendent Nurse! It is proposed to define the position of the various officers of the workhouse as follows: (1) The Guardians as administrators; (2) the Master as the responsible officer of the whole establishment; (3) the Medical Officer; (4) the Matron, responsible to the

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