

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* * * All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.



Miss Constance M. Mudge, Surgery Sister at Guy's Hospital, is appealing in the *Times* for funds to provide additional accommodation for the out-patients. That the necessity is an urgent one may be gathered from her statement that—

“The front surgery at Guy's is the department in which all patients are first seen. It is the place where it is determined whether they shall enter the

hospital as in-patients or receive continued treatment as out-patients. Our average attendance is 300 patients each day; rather more than half of these are women and children. The room portioned off for their reception is not capable of accommodating more than twenty at a time, and there are often as many as sixty waiting to be seen. The only arrangement we can make for this extra number is to seat them on benches outside. During the summer time this is not very intolerable, but at winter time it is heart-aching work to keep women waiting in the cold, perhaps suffering from some very acute disorder, or worse still, the delicate little babies. There is no help for it, for, though the worst cases are seen first, still the patients must take their turn.

“What we want is a sufficient sum to build a waiting-room for the women's division; the plans are already designed, and if the work could be put in hand at once there would be some chance of a shelter for this overflow of suffering humanity. The ever-increasing population of South London puts more and more work on the hospital, and if the present rate is continued one dreads to think of the poor women and children still waiting in the cold of the ensuing winter. The cost of this room would be only some £500. It is a small amount compared with the vast fortunes which are existing, and which are sometimes given in charities, and a small sum which would represent so much comfort to the poor and needy of our very poor district.”

One of the London hospitals recently advertised for a Matron, and stipulated that “she must be a member of the Church of England.” This indiscretion of course immediately called forth the question: Are the subscribers and patients restricted to membership of the same Church? Surely it is time to cease inquiries into the religious opinions of female officials. We never remember to have observed in an advertisement for a medical officer or secretary any such inquiry. Sectarianism arouses so much bitter feeling when sanctioned in public institutions, and, as far as we can gather, is the root of most of the mischief in Irish infirmary affairs.

The result of our further inquiries into the circumstances connected with the resignation of Miss Florence Frost, Matron of St. Luke's Hospital, Halifax, has been to confirm the conclusions which we published last week, and to prove a general consensus of opinion that Miss Frost has been very badly treated. Every Matron who enforces necessary discipline, in the interests of an institution, from time to time incurs the resentment of individual subordinates, and it is the duty of the Committee or the Board of Guardians to whom she is responsible to protect her in the discharge of duties which are often disagreeable. It is certain that Guardians who fail to accord to their Matrons the support which they have a right to expect will find it increasingly difficult to obtain competent officers.

We are not surprised to see that the Halifax local press “wants to know,” amongst other things, “If the Board of Guardians is about to apply to the Local Government Board for permission to change its name to the Board of Gossips, and if the following new by-laws have been adopted: That no Matron or nurse shall be permitted to go to the railway station, unless accompanied by at least three Guardians and two other nurses. That any Guardian proposing to go to London shall enter such intention in a book to be provided for the purpose, such book to be open to inspection by the Private Detection Committee. That when a Guardian has occasion to take a lady home in a cab, the Guardian shall sit inside and the lady on the box-seat.”

Sir Harry Johnston, one of our most successful Colonial Governors, who contested Rochester in the Liberal interest, spoke out on the inefficiency of the present Ministry. “Are you aware,” asked Sir Harry recently, “that half the young men who have lost their lives on the British side in the South African War lost them not so much because they were engaged in a fair fight with a gallant enemy, as because their lives were deliberately thrown away by the want of the most elementary care and foresight on the part of Ministers in office between 1895 and 1900?”

To take only one instance, in which as nurses we are concerned. If the representations of those experienced nurses who for long had proclaimed the need for the reorganisation of the Army Nursing Service on a modern basis, and for the formation of an effective Nursing Reserve in which the selection and control of the members should be in experienced hands, how many lives might have been saved by skilled nursing which were lost for the lack of it.

An important point was recently brought up at a meeting of the Newton Abbot Board of Guardians when the Rev. J. J. Atkins said he understood the resolution passed a few years ago, that the nurses on

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)