

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\* \* \* All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.



We congratulate the Committee of the London Hospital on their decision to arrange wards for the reception of obstetric patients; it is an example which we wish every large training-school would follow. It would manifestly be to the advantage of medical students to obtain part of their obstetric experience in the wards of the school to which they belong, and equally every probationer, in the course of a three years' training, should receive instruction in obstetric nursing, for in this period she should certainly receive an insight into the three main branches of nursing. In the case of the London Hospital, the new wards will undoubtedly be a boon to the poor surrounding the hospital. The principal Maternity Hospital in that vicinity is the East-End Mothers' Home with eighteen beds, so there is ample room, in the heart of the East End with its teeming millions for further hospital accommodation. The reason, no doubt, why hospitals ceased to admit obstetric cases was because of the ghastly prevalence of septicæmia which at one time decimated them. But we have grown wiser since those days. We know the importance of surgical cleanliness, of asepsis, of sanitary arrangements above suspicion, of admitting the obstetric cases to a separate block, and keeping students and nurses in attendance upon them separate from those working in the general wards; above all, of the necessity for prohibiting attendance in the *post-mortem* room by anyone engaged in the obstetrical service.

A new terror will be added to hospital management, to say nothing of an incentive to extravagance, if the value of such institutions is to be governed by Sir Frederick Treves' reasoning. At a meeting at the Mansion House on behalf of the Hospital Saturday Fund he gave some remarkable figures relative to the year's work at the London Hospital.

He said that more than 1,000,000 pills and tablets, three tons of Epsom salts, three tons of carbolic acid, ten tons of lint, which would stretch seventy-five miles, and eight tons of cotton wool were required every year.

All nurses know the extraordinary faith the poor have in drugs, and how injured they feel if

their treatment does not include the swallowing of nauseous potions and boluses. Old London Hospital Sisters, by the doctor's order, gave generously three times a day of a red-brown liquid marked "Mist. Rubra" to patients of this rapacious temperament, and smiled sympathetically when told "what a world of good that there medicine has done me." This was in the days before nurses wrote or studied works on *materia medica*, so that the innocent fraud will not be counted against them.

We deprecate statistical popularity where charity is concerned, knowing well that figures may be made to prove anything, and consider the *result* of treatment is what concerns the subscriber. We once knew a nurse resign from a London District Nursing Society because she strongly disapproved of the system of hustle in visiting patients, so that thousands of visits might be tabulated in the annual report.

The waste of food in workhouses due to the red tapeism which requires that each official and inmate shall be supplied with a regulation quantity, irrespective of what he or she can consume, is well known. It is a strange fact also that the higher the position of the official the larger appetite he is supposed to have, and we well remember the difficulties of the Matron of a large Metropolitan workhouse infirmary, provided with a supply of rations which seemed abnormal for a hearty man, who could by no means consume them, who could not give the surplus to the scrubbers, because they were not allowed to take food away from the premises, and who really was sorely put to it to dispose of her weekly supplies. The food, it must be mentioned, was cooked by a workhouse inmate, so there was no temptation to consume an excessive amount, and a good deal was spoiled in the cooking.

Recently the Visiting Committee at the meeting of the Hampstead Board of Guardians called attention to the "terrible waste" caused in the workhouse, because most of the food had to be served out in regulation quantities to each inmate, irrespective of whether he or she could eat it or not. This was especially the case with the potatoes, and the master was asked to report to the Board on the practicability of serving the potatoes in dishes so that the inmates might help themselves, instead of literally carrying out the Local Government Board's regulation. The Clerk reminded the Guardians that they, with the Chorlton Guardians, were chiefly instrumental in obtaining an alteration in the regulations as to the serving out of bread, whereby an enormous saving was effected in every workhouse in the country.

Schemes are on foot, under the auspices of the Wandsworth Traders' Association and the Putney

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