

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* * All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.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 offer of Mr. Edward Speyer to give a prize of £100 and a silver cup for the best essay on "The Economical Management of an Efficient Voluntary Hospital" is arousing a large amount of interest in the secretarial hospital world. But the economical management of all such institutions depends to a very large extent on the efficiency of the domestic department, which again depends on the head of that department—*i.e.*, the Matron. It would be of interest, as well as benefit, if some one would come forward and offer a prize for the best essay on "The Economical Management of the Domestic Department of an Efficient Voluntary Hospital," open to Matrons and Assistant Matrons. The question involved would cover a wide ground, from the purchase of stores, and the means taken to ensure that goods supplied are up to the standard upon which the contract was given, to the provision of a nourishing, varied, and appetising dietary for patients and nurses, and the dainty service of meals for the sick, a point too often overlooked in hospitals in this country.

This reminds us of a point once placed before us by a supporter of a small country hospital, where the beds in the women's ward numbered five. A *protégée* of this lady had been a patient in the hospital, and expressed herself grateful for all the attention she had received, but said she never could get over the repulsion which she felt to the thick mug in which her tea was served morning and evening, and which quite took the edge off the small appetite for her meals which she felt. The lady, in the kindness of her heart, offered to present the hospital with cups and saucers for the use of the women's ward, but the offer was opposed by the Matron, who said that she would have to ask for extra help with the washing-up if it were accepted.

The afternoon cup of tea is one to which all English working women look forward, and when at home they certainly do not drink it out of mugs nearly half-an-inch in thickness. Why should this be required of them in hospital, when the appetite is frequently fanciful and needs tempting. Not only are thick mugs ordinarily supplied, but in some cases these are even of enamel. We know of one London hospital where in a women's ward of

twenty-four beds the nurses clubbed together and bought a tea service, which they washed up and put away each day themselves, and were well rewarded for their trouble by the enjoyment with which the patients looked forward to the tea hour.

Over and over again the insufficiency of the nursing staff in many workhouse infirmaries is the subject of comment by juries at coroners' inquests, and it is surely time, even in this land of liberty, for the Local Government Board to take effective action, and insist that the number of nurses employed in infirmaries and workhouse wards should bear a certain minimum proportion to the number of occupied beds. In a case in which an inquest was held recently on the body of an old woman who some little time before her death had sustained a fracture of the clavicle, it came to light that the whole of the infirmary of which she was an inmate was left at night in charge of three nurses. The infirmary contained 112 beds, and none of the nurses concerned had completed their training. It was alleged in evidence that the fracture had been said by the old woman to have been caused by rough handling by one of the nurses—a young probationer of a few months' standing. There was no other evidence against the nurses, so the jury found an open verdict, and added that in their opinion the infirmary was under-staffed and that a qualified nurse should be in charge at night.

The term "qualified nurse" is somewhat an unhappy one, considering the meaning attached to it in the recommendations of the Departmental Committee appointed to inquire into the Nursing of the Sick Poor in Workhouses. By the way, are we ever going to hear what the Local Government Board intends to do with this hybrid? The nursing world has waited for long. Is it possible that she is to be pigeon-holed, and that we shall hear no more of her? The indignation aroused at the attempt to thrust her upon the poor-law nursing world was sufficiently forcibly expressed to penetrate even the understanding of a Government Department.

Many nurses, more especially those who are members of the Guild of St. Barnabas, will be glad to know that Canon Holmes, Vicar of Sonning, Berks, has published in book form, under the title of "In Watchings Often," the notes of addresses which he has given at the annual retreats of that Guild. The price of the book, which is published by Messrs. Longmans, Green and Co., is 2s. 6d., or in cloth covers 3s. 6d.

The Bishop of Lincoln, in his preface, says:—"In the general progress which has gone on in our age, the science of medicine and surgery has kept well in advance. A new responsibility has consequently fallen upon nurses, more knowledge is required of them, more skill, and senses finer and

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