

## 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\* \* All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.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 Annual Report of the Colonial Nursing Association is always an interesting publication, dealing as it does with nursing matters in various parts of the Empire. Experience has more than ever convinced the Committee of the necessity of midwifery training for nurses who take up colonial work; and they therefore, informed all those belonging to the Association who were serving abroad of the work undertaken by the Central Midwives' Board, pointing out the advantage of possessing the certificate granted by the Board, and offering special facilities to enable nurses, who were duly qualified, to benefit by the "period of grace" which expired in April of this year. A large proportion of the nurses have now, by the aid of the Association, been registered under the new Act.

A grant, not exceeding £45 a year, for three years has been made by the Association towards the salary of the Nurse-Matron stationed in the island of St. Vincent, together with a sum of £25 for her outward passage and a promise to defray the cost of her homeward journey on the completion of her term of service. The last nurse stationed in the island (Miss Rachel Paterson) rendered most valuable help during the terrible eruption of 1902, and has since been made an Honorary Serving Sister of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in recognition of her services there. The cost of her maintenance was defrayed partly from a local trust fund and partly by private subscription, but owing to the misfortunes of the island little or nothing is now available from the last-named source. The residents would have been deprived of the services of a trained English nurse, and a great deal of the good work done by the last nurse would have been undone, had not the Association undertaken to make up the necessary amount for three years, in the hope that this assistance might enable the residents to provide a nurse for themselves when times are better.

One of the Government Nurses gives the following interesting account of the journey from Chindé, the seaport, to Blantyre, British Central Africa:—  
"At the wharf the river steamer was waiting for us. The first part of the river is lovely, just like a succession of little lakes, edged with thick trees and

bushes with lovely creepers hanging from the branches or trailing in the water. We had not gone far before we saw the snouts of two hippopotami and the sort of line their big backs made in the water as they crossed the stream behind us. Five days brought us to Chiromo, where we had to leave the steamer and get into a house-boat propelled by natives with long poles. We drew up to the bank for meals, and the men boiled the kettle for us to make tea, and at night they made big fires to scare away the wild beasts. After two days we left the river and proceeded by machilla (hammock) to Blantyre, which we reached the same evening."

It is interesting to learn from the *St. John's House News* some of the difficulties with which the House was confronted in the early days of its organisation. The constitution provided that there should be a Master (a clergyman) and a Lady Superior. In 1855 the Master in his Report proposed radical alterations in the government of the House, and drew attention to the difficulties consequent upon there being as many as five distinct authorities to be appealed to. He was liberal-minded enough to suggest that it would be wise to depute the authority to the Lady Superior, who should be aided in all spiritual functions by a Chaplain who should have neither power nor responsibility in the government and other affairs of the House. On the other hand, if the Chaplain or Master were the person selected, his authority should be sole and undisputed in all matters whatsoever within the House. The Lady Superior was against any alteration being made! Her reason was that "the Council is the bulwark of the Institution and its guarantee to the public for soundness of principle and healthiness of action."

About the same time propositions were made to St. John's House from King's College Hospital as to whether the nursing of the hospital could be undertaken by the House. Eventually on March 31st, 1856, the Sisters and nurses took over the work. The day they took possession nearly all the old staff, who resented the change, waited bonneted and cloaked in the hall for their arrival, and then left at once, leaving them to find out the bad cases for themselves. By the end of the day the newcomers, who had arrived in clean and dainty uniforms, were more like a set of sweeps or charwomen, in such an appalling state of disorder had they found their wards.

Miss Honnor, who after many years' work recently retired on pension from the staff of St. John's House, has now an appointment at the Hospital for Diseases of the Skin, 52, Stamford Street, Blackfriars, where she manages the Light Department daily from one to five. She has under her care two Finsen Lights, two Radiums, one X-Rays, and one High Frequency Lamp.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)