

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* * All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.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 present week has been an exceptionally remarkable one in connection with municipal and national matters. It has seen the laying of the foundation stone by the King of the new buildings at the General Post Office, that great national institution which has done so much to bind together the mother country and her colonies. It has seen the successful conclusion to a well-conceived municipal enterprise in the opening, also by the King, of the two new thoroughfares—Kingsway and Aldwych—and the week concludes with the observation on Trafalgar Day (October 21st) of the Nelson Centenary, when with every honour that can be devised we pay homage to the memory of that gallant hero of a hundred years ago, Horatio, Lord Nelson. Nurses are second to none in their patriotism. Their uniform was a conspicuous feature in the crowds which assembled to view the two first-named ceremonies, and they will doubtless be also present in considerable numbers in the Albert Hall this afternoon and evening, for which magnificent demonstrations have been arranged.

Many old friends will wish Miss Butler, the late Matron of the Samaritan Free Hospital, *bon voyage*, although an unexpected change of plans prevented her saying "good-bye." Miss Butler sailed on Monday in the good ship *Inhosi* for South Africa, where she proposes staying for a year, and we hope she will have a delightful time. A year flies away at such a pace, that we shall be welcoming her home again in no time.

We are glad to note that at the North-Western Poor Law Conference, held at Southport, the Rev. Father Roche, of the Bucklow Union, who read a paper on "Nursing in Small Workhouses, and the Administration of Union Infirmaries," expressed views which we have always maintained as to the qualifications of the Workhouse Matron. He said:—"The Consolidated Orders of 1847, the Nursing Order of 1897, and, so far as I have been able to learn, all official decisions of the Local Government Board, and almost all discussion of the subject of workhouse management, establish the supreme authority in the government of any workhouse in the Master, and under him, of the Matron, and this government or supervision extends over the hospital

also. No one can question this, and no one does. It is therefore of the most vital importance, if Boards of Guardians would do their office to the poor, and especially the sick poor, justly and satisfactorily, that the greatest possible care and all the judgment they can obtain should be exercised in the selection of persons for so supremely responsible a post.

Too often, I fear, the only qualification the Matron has for her responsibilities is that she is the wife of the Master, and the lowest offer gets the job—in other words, it is the minimum of cost that has been the guiding principle in selecting her—and the result is not infrequently maximum of inefficiency, with an abundant train of worries and small disasters for the House Committee in the years to come. . . . It is hardly likely, then, that superintendent and other nurses, who by training and education are women of refinement and culture, whose vocation in life is to tend the sick and failing with scientific exactness and womanly sympathy, it is hardly likely, I say, that such women will allow themselves to be for long the victims of a petty tyrant or a blustering bully 'dressed in a little brief authority.' We cannot do without our nurses, and we cannot do without the best—best in knowledge and character—and it is ours to see to it that life in our workhouse hospitals is made possible for them without breaking them down in health or character. . . . As regards the Matron, except in the very smallest workhouses, I am strongly of opinion that the post should not be held by the wife of the Master, and where it is so held she should be one who is qualified to act as Head Nurse. It would take up too much of your time to go into all the details, but I am convinced that both these statements are sound, and in the interests ultimately both of efficient and economical administration, and that they are borne out by the evidence and recommendations of the Departmental Committee of 1902."

Truth congratulates the Chairman of the Hospitals Committee of the Metropolitan Asylums Board upon his prompt recognition of the desirability of inquiring into the reflections made by a lady patient upon the management at one of the fever hospitals. It always strikes us as unfair that in making accusations people do not name the institution they consider in fault, instead of reflecting upon others. Why should every hospital under the management of the Asylums Board suffer because one may be in fault?

We are glad to note that Boards of Guardians are more and more adopting the sensible system of subsidising district nursing associations in return for the care of those in receipt of out-door relief. Newark is the latest town to make this arrangement, and as a Queen's Nurse will attend the sick poor all will be well.

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