

### Nursing Echoes.

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It is sometimes asserted that there is a shortage of nurses, and that the demands for their services have of recent years increased so much that there are not enough of them to fill the vacant posts. This, however, is disproved by the number of applicants for a post where the work is congenial. It is no unusual thing for 50 to 100 nurses to apply for a vacancy as Matron in quite small hospitals, and only the other day the Committee of a Cottage Hospital received 125 applications for the Matron's post when vacant. Evidently, therefore, there is no lack of nurses desiring work, and the fact that in some branches of nursing the supply does not meet the demand is proof that there is something unacceptable in the conditions connected with the post rather than that there is a dearth of nurses.

Miss E. Fowler and Miss M. E. Rowell, who are opening a nursing home at Beaumont Street, W., are now ready for the reception of cases. The whole house, inside and out, from basement to roof has been cleaned and redecorated, and is as spick and span as can be. The walls are hung with washing papers, and the beds with hem-stitched linen sheets, and dainty bed spreads are most inviting. The rooms are bright, airy, and of good size. The windows are hung with casement curtains, thus obviating the necessity for any blinds, a most hygienic method as, of course, the curtains can be frequently taken down and cleaned or washed. One room has been converted into a bath-room, and here a steriliser has been fixed, a quite indispensable convenience in these days.

At a special meeting of the Brentford District Council held to investigate the complaints made by Mr. Schubert as to the neglect of his child who died in the Brentford Isolation Hospital, the Council, which deliberated in private, subsequently communicated to the Press that after a long and heated discussion,

they had found Mr. Schubert's complaints to be justified in the main. They ordered the instant dismissal of the Superintendent Nurse, and severely censured other officials.

It would be interesting to know the grounds on which the Superintendent Nurse was dismissed. One of the complaints was that no Nurse "walked the ward between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.," but if, as Mrs. Schubert alleges, there were 36 children in the hospital at one time during a bad outbreak of scarlet fever, and that the staff consisted of a Matron and one assistant nurse, with a porter and a woman to clean and cook, we do not wonder that she added, "They couldn't do it all; little children want so much attention. There's no regular night nurse, only a nurse sleeping in the room with the children, and they have to get up and attend to themselves."

No nurse should undertake a position in which it is impossible for her to do her duty by the patients, but if the nursing arrangements are inadequate the District Council are primarily responsible. It is their duty to provide a sufficient staff of nurses.

In connection with the case Mr. Edgar Jephson, writing in the *Tribune*, advocates the appointment of a special body of hospital inspectors. He writes: "If an incompetent or careless medical officer or Matron be appointed, the sick suffer the tortures of carelessness and neglect, the hospital funds are depleted by extravagance and waste for months, or even years, before reform comes. It seems to me that the readiest and easiest way to remedy these defects is to appoint a special body of hospital inspectors—women inspectors for choice, since women are quicker to detect neglect and waste than men. It need not be a large body, a dozen women could easily inspect efficiently all the hospitals in England. They should have the right of instant entry by day and night, and should be particularly required to make sudden night inspections, since the sick are chiefly neglected at night. Such a body could be recruited from among the experienced matrons of great hospitals. The mere possibility of the sudden descent of such inspectors would increase vastly the efficiency of hospital staffs, since the prevention of hospital scandals is chiefly a matter of keeping people up to their work. No properly-conducted hospital will resent the appointment of such inspectors."

Miss E. Myers, who has, we learn from the *Queen's Nurses Magazine*, been appointed Superintendent of Queen's Nurses at Sheffield,

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