

## Nursing Echoes.



In a long letter to the *Times*, Miss Lucy E. Ashby, M. R. B. N. A., discusses "Hospital Nurses and the Living-in System," which she strongly condemns, holding it responsible for giving to nurses "an institutional taint which is as harmful as it is obnoxious," for the ignorance shown by nurses of what is going on in the world around them, and many other evils.

Miss Ashby says: "It may come as a surprise to many of my readers that the living-in system is a burning grievance with almost every hospital nurse throughout the country."

It may, indeed. We may say at once that of all the thousands of nurses we have known, we have never met one who expressed any desire to "live out." Indeed, we believe there are few nurses who would care to live, if they had the opportunity, at a distance from their training school, swallow a lonely breakfast at 6.30 a.m. at the latest, turn out in all weathers, and arrive at the hospital in time to get into indoor uniform, and be in the wards promptly at 7 a.m., an hour made imperative for day nurses to go on duty by the exigencies of hospital life. Miss Ashby contends that no sound argument can be brought forward in favour of the living-in system. "Its only recommendation lies in the fact that it has been practised for a good many years; but, if we look round us for a few moments, we shall find hundreds of evils quite as old that are being quietly eradicated. Progress demands it."

We think that few Matrons would be bold enough to attempt to be responsible for the nursing of a hospital if the nurses were non-resident. Moreover, it must be remembered that the three years' training of a nurse closely resembles the collegiate course of an undergraduate. How many undergraduates would willingly be "unattached" instead of having "rooms in College," sharing the social life of their fellow students, and drinking deep of the spirit of their *Alma Mater*. Many nurses form life-long friendships with the comrades of their probationer days; they would miss the pleasure and the inspiration of these if they came off duty only to hurry out of the hospital in order to attain "in the matter of freedom

to the status of the typist and the clerk." We have no hesitation whatever in saying that if nurses were invited to vote on the subject those who elected to "live out" would be few and far between.

A meeting with the object of inaugurating a County Nursing Association for Hertfordshire was held by permission of the Marquess and Marchioness of Salisbury, at 20, Arlington Street, W., on October 1st. The Earl of Clarendon presided, and introduced the subject to the meeting. He urged that as a matter of imperial responsibility it was a public duty to lay the foundation of a strong and stalwart race, competent to perform the duties of citizens and to take part in the defence of the Empire. There was nothing more pathetic than to see old age sink into premature senile decay, middle age useless before its time, and early youth under the ban of disease which by care and money could be avoided. This, such an Association as was suggested, would assist in preventing.

Countess Cowper then presented the report of the Executive Committee, which was adopted, and which recommended the establishment of a Training Home in Watford, and that Miss Allison's appointment to the post of Superintendent of the Home be confirmed. Miss Amy Hughes, General Superintendent of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute, then gave an outline of the scheme proposed, which was to train and employ midwives, and to give them an elementary knowledge of general nursing. She described the advantages of affiliation with the Q.V.J.I., which desired not to interfere but to co-operate with local associations; a system of inspection was thus introduced, and nurses brought under supervision. Mr. F. E. Fremantle, Herts County Medical Officer, supported the scheme. Committees were then appointed, and it was agreed that the Herts County Council be asked to allow Miss Burnside, County Inspector of Midwives, to act as County Superintendent and Secretary to the County Nursing Association. It was agreed to approach the County Council with a view to obtaining a grant to assist in the education and training of midwives in the County. Amongst the aims of the Association is the training of women who go out as helps, an aim which was cordially endorsed by Sir William Church, President of the Royal College of Physicians.

The Coventry Nursing Institution, of which Miss Monro is the Lady Superintendent, has

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