

Nursing Echoes.

HER MAJESTY QUEEN MARY has been graciously pleased to appoint 104 nurses to be Queen's Nurses; 84 in England, 2 in Wales, 13 in Scotland and 5 in Northern Ireland.

IT GAVE THE NURSES of Westminster Hospital great pleasure and pride when Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, graciously consented recently to present their prizes, in the Nurses' Home of the Hospital.

The Queen referred to the ties the Royal Family had had with the Westminster Hospital and its nurses, and especially when His Late Majesty the King was nursed by members of the staff.

The Gold Medal for the best practical nurse of 1952 went to Nurse Frances Pennale, and the Silver Medal was presented to Nurse Rosemary Almond.

Her Majesty the Queen Mother presented 89 awards to successful nurses.

ON JANUARY 16TH, the people of Walsall honoured the 121st anniversary of the birth of their own Sister Dora, when wreaths were laid by the town's dignitaries upon the statue erected to her memory on the Bridge.

Mr. J. N. F. Cotterell, Vice-Chairman of the Walsall Hospital Management Committee said with great feeling:

"In her day methods of nursing were very crude, but in spite of the advancement of medical science, equipment and buildings, it is still true that personal service matters most.

"Her life and the service she rendered to the sick and suffering of this town are an inspiration not only to those who are taking up nursing as a profession, but to all those who are in any way connected with the hospital and health service of Walsall. It is up to us to try and maintain the high standard she set us."

TITLES OF THE PRIZE ESSAY open competitions for 1953 are announced by the Royal Sanitary Institute. Two prizes are offered this year as follows:

The John Edward Worth Prize of £60 for an essay on Internal Planning Lay-Out and Equipment of Dwellings to Reduce Domestic Work Without Loss of Efficiency and Within Reasonable Expenditure.

The John S. Owens Prize of £15 for an essay on The Location of Industry Having Regard to the Health of the People.

Intending competitors should apply to the Secretary, the Royal Sanitary Institute, 90, Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W.1, for a copy of the conditions. Entries must be received by December 31st, 1953.

WE ARE VERY HAPPY to be able to correct a statement made in our December, 1952 issue, when we had culled from the Press the information that semi-trained nurses were to have representation in the International Council of Nurses.

We now learn that an official representative of the National Association of State Controlled Assistant Nurses is not eligible to attend the International Council of Nurses' Conference to be held in Brazil this year.

Beating The Devil Out of Epilepsy.

Condensed from "To-day's Health"

By Paul de Kruijff.

EPILEPSY HAS FOR LONG AGES been a sinister mystery. Sufferers from this complaint have been outcasts and their parents have felt hopeless and ashamed.

In America to-day, 750,000 suffer from the terror of epileptic seizure. There is a strong tendency to believe that epilepsy tends to get worse, usually ending in mental decay.

This is not so; many who suffer get well spontaneously, and powerful new remedies in the hands of experienced doctors can rid still more victims of seizures.

Dr. William G. Lennox, an expert on this subject, and carrying on his work at the Children's Hospital, Massachusetts, tells us that this menace and fear of returning convulsions need not be, and Lennox is an expert and a leading light in this fight against epilepsy, since a close relative became a victim to this terror some thirty years ago. He has mastered all the ins-and-outs of the sickness that could show itself by furious convulsions or by momentary blackouts of consciousness, fogs of mental confusion, nightmares, unaccountable falling down and outbursts of dangerous rage.

Any, or all of these, alone or together, might spell epilepsy to expert doctors. Seizures have one hopeful peculiarity. They are paroxysmal. Most of the time the average victim seems quite fit.

The cause of the paroxysms remained a mystery after 15 years' research work by Dr. Lennox and Professor Stanley Cobb.

Then the Austrian genius Hans Berger demonstrated that the human brain has a constant electrical beat, in fact a rhythm. When the pulses are picked up by electrodes and amplified, they wrote a smooth ripple on moving strips of paper. Berger's machine, the electro-encephalograph (E.E.G.), told Dr. Lennox an exciting story.

In every type of epileptic fit the quiet ripple of normal brain waves goes haywire, on a different track for each kind of fit.

In convulsions (*grand mal*), the rhythm is faster, the waves bigger. In blackouts (*petit mal*), waves alternate, fast then slow. During epileptic confusion (*psyclo-motor*), the waves are much bigger and slower than normal.

By 1940, Dr. Lennox and his co-workers (the Boston group), had proved that epilepsy is a temporary electrical storm in the brain—an upset of circuits connecting millions of brain cells, the neurons. The E.E.G. recorded badly upset waves, even with no outward seizures.

It showed that sudden spells of bad behaviour were sometimes caused by epilepsy. It revealed which treatment made victims worse, and what chemical might have a chance to make them better.

Systematic brain-wave surveys disclosed a curious fact; for every out-and-out epileptic, there are twenty people with slightly abnormal brain-waves—no seizures, but *predisposed* to them.

The machine's story held hope. The Boston enthusiasts questioned families in which epilepsy had appeared. They learned that of those relatives who had suffered convulsions at least half had only a few, which faded away without treatment. Nature, stabilizing their abnormal brain-waves, had cured them. The E.E.G. helped to prove that time is on the side of the epileptic, whose disorder is primarily one of youth.

The scientists still had a black demon to fight: the belief that epileptics progress to mental deterioration.

Of a series of 1,640 out-patient victims, only seven per cent. were deteriorated mentally. Mental decay is *not* common among epileptics.

Dr. Louise Collins, of Boston, found 22 of 300 surgery patients to be above normal. At the root of this superstition is a statistical blunder. Old surveys dealt only with institutionalised cases, neglecting the far greater outside epileptic population. The majority of the deteriorated drift into

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)