

THE GUILD OF ST. BARNABAS, FOR NURSES.

WE hope that it may interest some of our readers to hear about this Guild for Nurses.

The Guild was formed some twelve years ago by some nurses, who recognised that though there were many existing agencies that would help on the spiritual life of a nurse, still there was none that met their peculiar needs. A Guild for Nurses must recognise that a nurse has special temptations, that her life is of necessity a roving one, and often a lonely one, and that a great essential in becoming a good, helpful nurse is to aim at a high Christian life. Every calling has of necessity its temptations; but it is hardly speaking too strongly to say that those that beset a nurse's career are such as press very hardly on her feminine nature, and any one conversant with the daily work of a nurse will recognise wherein the great danger lies. Moreover, the being brought face to face with some of the most complex problems of social life, and that without the special training of the logician or scholar, to understand them in their true bearing may be such a trial to faith, that the nurse may lose her priceless possession of a true well-grounded faith, and drift hither and thither, a rudderless ship on a wide sea of doubt and misbelief. Therefore, to help a nurse in her struggles and loneliness, to strengthen her against temptations, to raise up the whole tone of her work and life—this is the aim and object of the Guild of St. Barnabas.

All who belong to the Guild are members of the nursing profession; they are united under a simple rule of life, such a rule as lies within the compass of their work, and is such as every member of the English Church can keep who recognises the obligations of her Baptismal vow; it offers advice, counsel, and religious help, and, moreover, heartens up and stimulates to true work by the bond of intercessory prayer and fellowship. It gathers in the lonely ones into a social meeting, and it tries to meet the roving ones by its country branches over the Kingdom; it warns the weak of the special temptations that lie in their path, and it would gird them to the fight by a strength other than their own, and above all it teaches all nurses that they will be better nurses for being better women.

The meetings are held once a month, both devotional and social, and addresses are then given to the members.

This is no charmed circle into which it is difficult to find entrance; the secretary, Miss C. J. Wood, 7, St. George's Mansions, Red Lion Square, will be glad to show any nurse the way, as the Guild holds out the right hand of fellowship to any nursing member of the English Church. It numbers at present over 600 members scattered up and down the world, and has a special magazine of its own.

FREE NURSING.

AT a recent meeting of the American Medical Association, so the *American Medical Record* informs us, Dr. Joseph Price gave particulars of an organisation called the Visiting Nurse Society, existing in Philadelphia, whose objects were to furnish Visiting Nurses to those otherwise unable to procure skilled attendance in time of illness, to teach cleanliness, and the proper care of the sick.

The Society had been established about two years ago, and had a staff consisting of seven nurses and assistants, and one maternity nurse. During the present year upwards of two hundred cases had been attended, about half of which were surgical.

We heartily commend this system, and should be glad to see it in general operation in England.

WHAT CONSTITUTES AN EFFICIENT NURSE.

By Miss MARIAN C. PINCOFFS.

IT is always difficult to describe clearly and shortly what constitutes an efficient nurse, for, though the principles of good nursing are easily defined, its essence is, in many ways, an intangible thing, and therefore difficult to put into words. Perhaps only nurses themselves will quite understand what is meant here, and only those who have mixed with, and nursed with, both hospital and private nurses can thoroughly realize the variety of material needed to constitute a really efficient nurse, in the widest meaning of the term. The strings of an instrument, however fine, will only respond to the touch of skilled and experienced fingers; but the depths of its tone, and the meaning of its music, depend, over and above the dexterity and the experience of the fingers, on the feeling and the sensitiveness of the mind of the player. In like manner good nursing may be either skilled mechanism, or may be rendered artistic work by combining with its science much that it is difficult to teach, and for which it is utterly impossible to lay down rules. A nurse, too, may be expert in surgical work, or clever in watching and in detecting symptoms in medical cases, and yet may be utterly unsympathetic to her patient, and therefore not efficient. Another may be thoroughly in unison with her charge, but deficient in the knowledge and the experience necessary to detect at once the subtle changes which may be so important, or understand the value of the symptoms seen perhaps for the first time. Yet, again, a nurse may be kind and thoughtful, and at the same time experienced, and yet wanting in innate delicacy, and therefore lacking in a quality every efficient nurse should possess.

Another, who manages her ward well, and is a

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