

Nursing Echoes.

* * All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith.

It is announced that a Public Dinner is to be held at the Whitehall Rooms of the Hotel Métropole



on Monday, July 17th, to celebrate the grant of a Royal Charter to the Royal British Nurses' Association. I hear that the leaders of the medical and nursing professions have adopted the project *con amore*, and that it is expected that there will be a large and influential gathering. I observe that the first List of Stewards comprises Sir William Savory, who is to take

the chair, Sir Spencer Wells, Sir Richard Quain, Sir Dyce Duckworth, Sir James Crichton Browne, Sir Henry Thompson, Sir Edward Sieveking, Sir Edwin Saunders, Sir Joseph Fayrer, Sir William Roberts, Sir Alfred Garrod, Sir William Priestley, Mrs. Bedford Fenwick, Miss Stewart, of St. Bartholomew's, Miss Thorold, of the Middlesex, and other equally well-known ladies and gentlemen. It is rumoured that the Matrons of some of our largest and most important Hospitals are now applying for membership of the Chartered Corporation of Nurses, and it is needless to add that the rank and file of the Nursing profession are also, on all hands, expressing their intention of not being left out in the cold, with the amateurs and the quacks.

* * *

THE following, from *The Times* of the 17th, 19th, and 27th insts., are most instructive as showing not only to what dangers the sick are exposed, but also the manner in which medical men now turn to the Register of Nurses, as they do to the Medical Directory in the case of their own professional brethren.

"At Bengo College, Hertford, yesterday, an inquiry was held concerning the death of Frederick Vincent Malim, aged 12 years, the son of Mr. Aubrey Vincent Malim, solicitor and town clerk of Grantham, who died at the college early on Wednesday morning through having a dose of carbolic acid administered to him by mistake.—The first witness called was Mr. Herbert Bowden Smith, the Principal of Bengo College, who said the deceased was one of his pupils. On Thursday last deceased was playing cricket, when he became unwell. Acting under witness's instructions he returned to the college, and on the following morning he was seen by the doctor, who stated that his throat was bad. The deceased was placed in a separate room with another lad. There was measles in the house, and he thought the deceased

might be developing the symptoms of that disease. The matron attended him and the doctor saw him twice a day. There appeared to be very little the matter with him. On the following Monday there were three more cases of measles, and witness wrote to St. John the Divine Nursing Institute, South Kensington, for an additional Nurse. On Tuesday afternoon they sent down Nurse Barnard. This lady took charge of the room at 5 o'clock in the evening. There were then five boys in it who had just been attacked with measles. Witness visited the room twice and found the Nurse attending to her duties. She was quite collected and seemed to know what to do. He went into the room for the last time at about 9 o'clock at night; everything then appeared to be all right. Witness spoke to the deceased, who answered him, and told him his cough troubled him a little. Shortly after 1 o'clock witness was aroused and told that Nurse Barnard had given the deceased carbolic acid instead of cough mixture. Witness proceeded to the room at once, and then went for Dr. Tasker Evans, who accompanied him without delay to the college, arriving there at about 20 minutes to 2 o'clock. The deceased died before his arrival.—Nurse Ada Barnard, who was cautioned before giving evidence, elected to be examined, and stated that she was properly certificated. On Tuesday she received her instructions from the matron as to the patients' medicine. She was also told that she was to use the carbolic acid in the steam-kettle if necessary. She received the bottle of carbolic acid from the matron at about 8 o'clock in the evening. She entered the dormitory with the intention of placing the bottle out of the way. One of the boys called for a drink, and she put the bottle down on the table for the moment, while she attended to him. She forgot afterwards to remove it. At 10 o'clock she went to bed, and was aroused at about one o'clock by the boys' coughing. She sprang out of bed quickly, and took up a bottle from the table to give him some mixture. She poured something into a glass, and without looking at it gave it to the deceased, who took it from her and swallowed it. Directly after he said it felt like liquid fire. It then flashed across her mind that she had made a mistake, and she at once examined the vial, which confirmed her fears. She gave the boy some milk and ran for Nurse M'Kay. She was not really awake until after she had given the deceased the acid. She knew that it was customary to keep poisons in corrugated bottles, and had she been really awake her suspicions would probably have been aroused when she took up the bottle of carbolic acid.—The Lady Superior of the St. John the Divine Nursing Institute said the last witness had excellent testimonials.—The Coroner, summed up at great length, after which the jury consulted in private. After a lengthy deliberation, they returned the following verdict:—"That the deceased died from the administration of carbolic acid in mistake for cough mixture by Nurse Barnard, under circumstances which satisfy the jury that there was gross negligence and carelessness on her part. But the jury think she was not sufficiently awake at the time to make her criminally responsible for the act." The coroner, on behalf of himself and the jury, expressed sincere condolence with the parents of the deceased in their sad bereavement, and sympathy was also expressed for Mr. Bowden-Smith.

TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE TIMES.'

Sir,—The lamentable accident at Bengo College, described in the report of an inquest in *The Times* of Saturday, seems to me to entitle the public to receive full information with regard to the qualifications of the Nurse by whom the poison was administered. Her

The "NURSING RECORD" has a Larger Sale than any other Journal devoted solely to Nursing Work.

The "NURSING RECORD" has a Larger Sale than any other Journal devoted solely to Nursing Work.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)