

## Nursing Echoes. -

MISS AGNES CATNACH, who was from 1934 to 1951 headmistress of Putney Secondary School, and was President of the English Association of Headmistresses in 1942-43, is sailing for Australia on June 13th on a four months' lecture tour arranged jointly by the Headmistresses' Association of Australia and the British Council. She will attend a conference of headmistresses, visit schools and meet education authorities and teachers.

Miss Catnach has been closely associated with many educational developments in the United Kingdom and was on the Secondary Schools Examination Council, which inaugurated the new General Certificate of Education. From 1926 to 1934 she was headmistress of Wallasey High School. She is a member of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales.

THE ROYAL SANITARY INSTITUTE announces the results of its 1954 prize essay competition for Health Visitors.

The prize of 20 guineas for the best essay has been divided between Miss Anne Barker, of the Public Health Department, Kensington, London, W.8, and Miss Ilse Windmuller, of Salford Health Department, Regent Road, Salford, 5.

This Journal offers its congratulations to these two ladies upon their success in the Prize Essay Competition.

## British Medical Association.

### Nurses Prize Essay Competition, 1955.

#### Category (i)—Student Nurses.

*Subject:* "The use a Student Nurse can make of the varied recreational and cultural pursuits available today."

*First Prize:* Joan M. Anstey-Cooke (Bristol Homœopathic Hospital).

*Second Prize:* Lesley W. Elliott (Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford).

*Highly Commended:* Anne G. Stirling (Aberdeen Royal Infirmary), June Davis (Addenbrooke's Hospital, Cambridge).

*Commended:* Kathleen Forbes (St. Charles Hospital, London).

#### Category (ii)—State Registered Nurses working in hospital.

*Subject:* "Cross infection in hospital wards and departments and its control."

*First Prize:* Claire B. Chetwynd (Royal Northern Hospital, London).

*Second Prize:* John Sayer (Hackney Hospital, London).

*Highly Commended:* Lorna G. Newman (Queen Mary's Hospital, Carshalton), Muriel S. Willa (Queen Alexandra Hospital, Portsmouth).

#### Category (iii)—State Registered Nurses working outside hospital.

*Prize:* Elizabeth C. N. Wilson (Martock, Somerset).

## National Pilgrimage to Lourdes.

May 16th—24th, 1955.

HIDDEN AWAY in the Pyrenees mountains, in the south-west corner of France, is Lourdes, the modern Mecca for Catholics all the world over.

It was pouring with rain, steady straight mountain rain, when the English pilgrims had their first view of the world-famous Grotto. As the snow-capped mountains came into view they crowded into the corridors of the train and lustily sang the haunting Lourdes Hymn in greeting to Our Lady of Lourdes. Their Aves echoed sweetly across the valley and were in full volume as the train entered the station after twenty-eight hours of hard travel, and there they had the happiness of finding His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster waiting on the platform to greet them.

Later that same evening, at about 9.30 p.m., the pilgrims went out in small parties in the heavy rain to keep their first appointment with Our Lady of Massabielle. All was very hushed and quiet within and around the Grotto precincts; so very quiet and still that it came as a shock to find a large number of people there already saying their Rosaries and private prayers absolutely heedless of the rain. It was a most arresting experience. There, standing in the hollow of the rock, on the exact spot where St. Bernadette first saw Our Lady, in 1858, was a life-sized statue of Our Lady of Lourdes. Great votive candles flickered in the night breeze just below in the shelter of the cave, casting faint shadows which seemed to give life to the lovely, still figure above. It was as if the statue were gently breathing, and about to impart a blessing. No one moved, nor seemed to want to go home, they were happy to be kneeling or standing there, watching and praying in the unnatural quiet and darkness.

The English pilgrimage opened officially at 9 a.m. on Wednesday May 18th. Pilgrims met together at the crowned statue of Our Lady, facing the Rosary Basilica. Headed by the Cardinal Archbishop and other high dignitaries of the Church, they proceeded in solemn order to the grotto and there the Cardinal celebrated Mass. In that hallowed spot one felt as if another world had impinged on ours for the peace of Heaven itself was all around.

After Mass, came the bathing of the sick pilgrims in the waters of the mountain spring which were called from the rock by St. Bernadette on the distinct instructions of Our Lady. The patients were wheeled to the baths by volunteers; the brancardiers, nurses and other voluntary workers, whilst other pilgrims outside the baths prayed earnestly for the sick who were being bathed. Healthy pilgrims also took a bath in the cold invigorating waters and all agreed on the wonderful cosy glow which they experienced afterwards.

The great event of the pilgrims' day is the Procession of the Blessed Sacrament and the Blessing of the Sick which takes place every afternoon in Lourdes, whilst the pilgrimage season is on. By 4.30 p.m. each day the great esplanade in front of the Basilica is flanked on either side by sick pilgrims on their stretchers or in chairs in the shade of the trees. All activities cease as the great bells announce the departure of the Blessed Sacrament from the Church for the Grotto. This magnificent procession must be seen to be believed, for it is a masterpiece of heavenly beauty and awe; perfectly arranged and timed. Pilgrims of all nationalities take part in it.

First come the Children of Mary, in their white dresses, blue cloaks and white veils, followed by others carrying most gloriously coloured banners. Men from all countries follow—then Priests and members of religious Orders who just precede the Blessed Sacrament, carried beneath a great white canopy. Immediately behind follow the Cardinals, Bishops, Nuns and Nurses, other women bring up the rear. As the procession slowly makes its way around the grounds of the Grotto, wonderful hymns, composed by the great mystic Doctors of the Church, are sung. Music from the organ of the

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