

Nursing Echoes.

* * *All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.*



WE are glad to observe, in the sub-editorial in the quarterly issue of the *Nurses' Journal*, that great stress is laid on the importance of the Paper contributed by Her Royal Highness Princess CHRISTIAN to the International Congress at Buda-Pesth, and we hope that all members of the Royal British Nurses' Association will mark the advice contained in

this article in our *Journal*.

WE quote the following very significant words for the benefit of those amongst our readers who do not belong to the Association, feeling sure that they will sympathise with the high aims of the Association, and do all in their power to help towards their accomplishment:—

It will be seen that the Executive Committee of the Association, in their report to the Council, have called special attention to the paper contributed by Her Royal Highness the President to the International Congress of Hygiene and Demography at Buda-Pesth, and have remarked upon it as being "an articulate public expression of the aspirations of the Corporation for the establishment of a State-recognised Register of Trained Nurses, based on an independent and similarly recognised examination." It would, in fact, be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this "expression," or the influence which it may exert upon the future training of Nurses. A State recognised examination would imply, as a matter of course, that no one who had not succeeded in passing it would be entitled to assume the title of "Nurse" or to recover in a court of law whatever might be the customary standard of remuneration for nursing services. It would imply, in other words, the possession of privileges, and it must be remembered that, in this country at least, privilege is only conferred in connection with recognised fitness for responsibility. The Legislature, before it will consent to confer the privileges, will have to be satisfied of the existence of a sufficient number of persons to whom they can safely be entrusted, and will also have to be satisfied of the existence of some body to which the discipline of the members of the new calling may be confided. Such a body will be found, it may reasonably be hoped and expected, in the Corporation; but Parliament will take nothing for granted, and will be certain closely to scrutinise any claims which may be advanced in our behalf. It will therefore be a matter of annually increasing importance that we should be able to show a stainless record, not only in our corporate capacity, but also with reference to the individuals by whom the Corporation is composed, in order that the very title of "Nurse" may be accepted as an expression of devotion to duty under the guidance of knowledge. The worst enemies of Nurses, for the future, will be those who tempt or compel the comparatively untrained to undertake the charge of the sick, and who, therefore, invite the commission of such errors as may arise naturally out of ignorance. The words of the President point out to us a noble goal, for the attainment

of which no effort should be spared. It will rest with Hospitals and Institutions to take the chief part in showing that we are worthy to obtain the object of our ambition; but, nevertheless, much will depend upon the conduct of individuals. It has been well said that one reform is within the power of everyone—the reform of self; and every Nurse who desires to see her calling recognised by the State as a profession, into which no unqualified person can intrude, may in her sphere contribute to the result by daily care to show that she, at least, is in every respect a fit recipient of the trust to which, for herself and for her sisterhood, it has now become her duty to aspire.

WE desire to draw the attention of every one of our readers to the Editorial in this week's issue, entitled "The Lewisham Infirmary," as we propose in due course to deal very fully with Nursing matters at this new Poor Law Institution. A correspondent writes:—"All trained Nurses working in similar Infirmarys will unite in conveying to Miss PATTISON, the Matron of the Institution, sincere sympathy for the position in which the performance of her duty has placed her, and sincere admiration for the courageous manner in which she has demanded an investigation by the Local Government Board into the accusations brought against her. It is hoped that this protest on the part of Miss PATTISON—who has gained for herself a high reputation in her profession, having been trained at St. Thomas's Hospital, and having worked with distinction elsewhere—will be made a test case, and that it will strengthen the hands of the Local Government Board in instituting drastic reforms in the relations of matron and medical superintendent, without which all hope for discipline and efficient Nursing in Poor Law Infirmarys is hopeless."

WE are glad to learn that those London Hospitals which have hitherto offended against fair dealing by sending out Probationers as "thoroughly trained Nurses"—charging for them the recognised fee paid for an efficient Nurse—are steadily decreasing in number, and that those which still continue this unconscientious practice are finding the wider knowledge of the public on the matter—which this *Journal* has taken the chief part in bringing about—an increasing obstacle to their unfair traffic. This is indeed good news, and is evidence of an awakening of conscience upon the part of employers of Nurses. We do not hesitate to say that medical men who employ Probationers, as Nurses in private families, knowingly, are retarding the progress of Nursing, are preventing proper care of their patients, and are placing a premium on ignorance and inefficiency. The Registered Nurses' Society, which is under medical and nursing control, gives a public guarantee of three years' training, so that there is now no reason why the public should be deluded in future, nor why trained Nurses should run the gauntlet of competition with unskilled labour in their private practice.

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