

Nurses of Note.

MISS FRANCES HUGHES.

Matron, St. Mary Abbott's Infirmary, Kensington;
Vice-Chairman of the Matrons' Council.

THOSE who work under Miss Hughes, Matron of St. Mary Abbott's Infirmary, respect and honour her; those who know her, love her; those who are called upon to work with her, value highly her counsel, judgment, experience and willingness to help. There is about her that quiet self-possession and firmness which carries conviction and consequent co-operation. It will therefore be welcome news to our readers that Miss Hughes has consented to act as one of the three Vice-Chairmen of the Matrons' Council.

A few days ago the writer of this notice had the pleasure of spending an afternoon in St. Mary Abbott's Infirmary, and in conversation over the tæacups, and in walking through the wards, was enabled to get a few facts about the career of the Matron. How was it that she first thought of Nursing as a lifework? She first thought of it, as so many of our best and most valued Nurses have, when quite a young girl, scarcely in her teens, and before there was even suggested the thought of carving a way in life, or making an income. Her father fell ill, and then it was that the little girl made herself useful, and enjoyed nothing so much as the privilege of sharing the work of Nursing.

In 1877, she commenced her training, spending one year in the Royal Free Hospital, and two under the valuable Superintendence of Miss Florence Lees, now Mrs. Dacre Craven. This was followed by a year's experience as a District Nurse in Paddington, and an insight into the duties of

governing by undertaking *locum tenens* for the Lady Superintendent at the Royal Free Hospital. In 1882 she took charge, for eight months, of two District Nursing Homes in Liverpool, and next year acted as *locum tenens* for the Matron of the Lincoln County Hospital. Then she was appointed first Lady Superintendent of the Nurses' Institute, Canterbury, a position which after two years' service she resigned. In January, 1886, she was elected to the important office of Matron of St. George in the East Infirmary, where she remained till September, 1889, when she undertook her present duties as Matron of St. Mary Abbott's Infirmary, Kensington.

Thus it will be seen that Miss Hughes has had a rich and varied experience of the sick poor in their own homes, of Nurses, in the capacity to them of Superior, and also of the arduous, responsible work of organising large Institutions.

A woman might well be proud of being Matron of St. Mary Abbott's Infirmary, and for more reasons

than one. It is a pretty, bright-looking structure built of red bricks and surrounded by a few trees—indeed the stranger passing along Marloes Road, a quiet contemplative thoroughfare, might very reasonably suppose himself to be in the neighbourhood of a mansion, especially when his eyes fall upon the adjoining workhouse, a charming piece of domestic architecture, with well-laid-out grounds, a fountain, and creeper-covered chapel in the foreground.

But to return to Miss Hughes. She is responsible for the efficient nursing of about 657 patients; and this number will be increased to 770 as soon as further additions have been made to the buildings. Besides the Matron and her assistant, Miss Malim, there are on her staff, one Midwife, two superintendents of night Nurses, sixteen Nurses, and forty-five probationer Nurses. Miss Hughes takes the keenest

interest in the training of her Nurses, and with the exception of accident cases it is as good as can be obtained in any Hospital, and she is specially gratified to think that medical students are not admitted to Infirmaries, as apart from other reasons, her Nurses can get much of the training and experience which otherwise would fall into the hands of the dressers. Those who desire training must be between the ages of 21 and 30. Miss Hughes believes in women having the opportunity of starting their training at 21, presuming that most are physically capable at that age, as it is a keen hardship to many to be refused admittance till 23 or 25. Another advantage, in her opinion, is that a salary is given from the outset, namely, £12 rising to £18. When a full-fledged Nurse the salary begins at £25 rising to £30. The instruction consists of ten lectures on the general details of Nursing, by Miss Hughes; six on

elementary anatomy and physiology, by the assistant medical officer; and six on nursing and hygiene by the medical superintendent. One has only to come in contact with Miss Hughes for a short time to realise that in her is to be found the careful, conscientious earnest worker. In all her thoughts the Infirmary ranks first; in its interest she is engaged from early in the morning till bedtime. But even the pressure of constant responsibility can be lightened by pretty surroundings; and Miss Hughes has undoubtedly a comfortable flat. The rooms all open into a good sized private corridor, which she has daintily furnished with couches, chairs, bookcases, pictures and plants.

In brief, Miss Frances Hughes is one of the best types of the Modern Trained Nurse and of the Modern Hospital Matron. The Matrons' Council is to be congratulated upon having secured Miss Hughes as a Vice-Chairman.



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