

Nursing Echoes.

* * * All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.



"A STAFF Nurse in a large General Hospital" writes to the *British Medical Journal* as follows, and we reprint the letter in *extenso* as it is the first occasion upon which we have noticed an expression of opinion concerning their own professional affairs from a Nurse in the organ of the British Medical Association. We hope it will not

be the last; anyway it is a healthy sign of the times.

SIR,—We are exceedingly glad that public notice is being turned to the present condition of Hospital Nurses, which is just now in a transition state, and certainly needs reorganising. Public Committees still require of us all the menial ward work which uneducated Nurses of former times used to do, not knowing, perhaps, that the Medical Staff who instruct us after our long day on duty exact of us ever more intelligent work, and an almost military smartness and discipline. All this, with the needs of the sick, the bad air of the wards, and the sad sights therein, makes the three years' Hospital Training so great a strain that a Nurse's health suffers, and is in some cases impaired for life. But this state of affairs ought not to continue. There should be three sets of Nurses, each working eight hours, as there are at King's College Hospital, London, and in some American Hospitals; then we could have lectures on all the branches of our profession with practical experience, and our Hospitals would become first-rate Training Schools. Let the ward work be done by illiterate ward-maids, and the nursing would be more thorough in consequence. Although our hours on duty are much too long, we often have not time to do both well. Legislation has stopped factory girls from working more than nine hours a day, with Saturday afternoon and Sunday free. Our days all the year round are twelve to twelve hours and a half, the work being hard, often depressing; but we have not complained hitherto, because we love it. At the same time, both for mind and body, it should be thought necessary to lighten our labour and shorten our hours.

I am, &c.,

A STAFF NURSE IN A LARGE
GENERAL HOSPITAL.

August 11th.

THE Medical Superintendent of the Wandsworth and Clapham Infirmary, Dr. Neal, has issued a report, in which he asserts that he has on three occasions, in 1891, 1893, and 1895, directed the Board's attention to the insufficient accom-

modation for the Nursing Staff. The mess-room regulations are stated to be far from satisfactory. Dr. Neal also says that a fortnight's holiday is insufficient to recoup the Nurses' health after a winter's work, and it is proposed to give them in future a month's vacation, as is done in many other similar Institutions in the Metropolis.

The Board at its last meeting also received a report from the Combined Relief Committee on the question of the Nurses' conditions at the Infirmary, and it is to be hoped that the proposal to erect a new Nurses' Home, which was ultimately agreed to, will be speedily carried out. A committee of five was appointed to arrange the plans, consisting of Mrs. Gray and Messrs. Hunt, Haws, Plumridge, and Jeffs. No doubt everything has been done by the present able officials to make the best of the present accommodation, and the Nurses have loyally supported them. But a new Nursing Home is the only satisfactory solution to the present difficulties, and will certainly be appreciated by all.

Mr. Rogers, at the same meeting of the Guardians, moved that more Night Nurses be engaged. He said two Nurses had to attend on 110 patients with chronic ailments in six wards; two others had the care of 117 patients, and two more had 86 under their charge. Dr. Neal was strongly in favour of this increase of the staff. Mr. Haines seconded this, and it was agreed to.

The proposals of Mr. Rogers to increase the Probationary Nurses' wages to £14 in the first year; and to give the polishing and scrubbing work now done by the Nurses to a labourer to do, were defeated. The question of allowing a full half-hour for breakfast was referred to the Infirmary Committee.

Altogether it is easy to read between the lines that improvements in the Nursing Department of this Infirmary are badly needed.

We cull the following from *The Scalpel*, headed "Riotous Specialism":—

"A young English lady, who is teacher of English in one of the chief ladies' schools in Germany, writes in a private letter to her father, who is a doctor—
' . . . I daresay that I shall have to go with the girls to the dentist instead. This house is a regular Hospital; the girls are always going to doctors and dentists. I do think they might have their noses scorched at home in the holidays instead of waiting till they come to school. There are two whose noses are being burned somehow; they go twice a week to the nose doctor, two others have to go three times a week to the eye doctor, and five others pay visits to

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