

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* * * *All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.*



THE Address to the Queen from the Matrons and Nurses of the Dublin Hospitals, which was received by her Majesty before leaving Dublin, was most artistic in form. The address itself was illuminated at the Royal Irish School of Employment for Women, Kildare Street, and was of Celtic design. At the left handed corner it bore a shield, and the City Arms also found place upon it. A special feature was the shamrock, which was intertwined with the beautiful lettering. The case in which the address was contained was worked at the Royal Irish School of Art Needlework. It was made of very rich white poplin, the lining being of a pale green shade of the same material. Upon the white ground was worked the Royal monogram in gold, and this was surmounted by the crown, and the date also in gold. A design of shamrocks surrounded the lettering. We congratulate the nurses of Dublin upon taking their place as a body of professional women amongst the other public bodies who presented addresses to the Queen. We also congratulate the Committee, formed to arrange the details of the Address, upon the able way in which the scheme was carried out.

It is noticeable that nurses, in common with most other bodies of workers, professional and otherwise, are quick to see when their financial interests are affected, and, though as a rule they are not great writers to the papers, a long letter from a nurse, who says she has had many years' experience, has appeared in a contemporary, in which a correspondent had suggested, apparently with greater regard for the interests of the working man than of the nurse, that nurses should, in working men's homes, be supplied for a nominal sum:—

Nursing Sister writes:—

"Of course, if the idea of having nurses for working men's homes could be carried out, it would undoubtedly be of the greatest benefit to poor people, who, as your correspondent mentions, cannot obtain the services of a duly qualified nurse without having to pay more than they can possibly afford.

But at the same time I would like to point out to

'Convalescent' that, while the cost of having a professional nurse in the house may seem somewhat great to the poorer classes, it would be practically impossible for those nurses who have to earn a livelihood at the profession to offer their services for 'a nominal sum,' as he puts it. It must be remembered that professional nurses only attain their proper qualifications after several years of hard work and expense, and that when they become duly qualified they are undoubtedly fully entitled to charge the fees which your correspondent and perhaps other of your readers consider exorbitant.

Undoubtedly the demand for nurses is considerably in excess of the supply, the reason being that it is only a very small minority of women who are capable of following this particular vocation in life. Moreover, many who are willing to devote their energies to attending the sick cannot do so on account of the very poor financial prospects. While the fees which a professional nurse charges are considered beyond the means of the working classes, yet their work is of such a character, and it has cost them so much in order to gain efficiency, that they can reasonably demand good remuneration for their services. And it is quite out of the question to suppose that a nurse would work for 'a nominal sum' in order that the poorer classes may derive the whole benefit. 'Live and let live' is a very excellent maxim to bear in mind, and I would recommend it to the notice of your correspondent 'Convalescent.'

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THERE is no doubt that neither nurses nor any other body of working women should be expected to work for a "nominal sum"; they should receive fair remuneration for their work, and in cases where the patient cannot afford to pay full fees, these should be secured to the nurse from special funds. In the case of the working classes, the need has been largely met by the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute, which secures to its nurses a comfortable home, and a definite salary. We could wish that nurses would discuss other of their professional affairs, besides the financial aspect—and with equal vigour.

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MARY BEATRICE MANNING, who, amongst other numerous rôles, posed as a nurse, and the "fiancée of a London medical man," and who has previously "done time" for fraud, was, last Monday, sentenced by the Common Serjeant at the Central Criminal Court to five years' penal servitude. Let us hope that, by the time she has completed her well-deserved sentence, that the Registration of Trained Nurses will have been accomplished, and that the nursing profession will be able to prove that she is not of their number. At present this is impossible. Anybody, from a Society lady to a convicted criminal, may don a nursing uniform if it seems well to her, and the nursing profession is held responsible for all the vagaries in which the wearer may seem fit to indulge.

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