

**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\* \* \* *All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.*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 Nursing Board of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service has now got to work, and the members are earnestly grappling with the many problems which confront them. With Miss Sidney Browne as Matron-in-Chief, the new Service has a hopeful future, for all who come into personal contact with her recognise that she combines the qualities which are needed to make a success of the arduous work before her.

We hear much criticism of the private nurse nowadays, some just, much which is unjust, but is not some of the discontent of private patients with nurses really well trained in their professional duties, due to the fact that the patient considers that a nurse should be able to perform natively and efficiently the duties of a well-trained maid, while the nurse considers that her duties end with those which she has been taught to perform for her hospital patients?

Although it is conceivable that in some cases the patient may expect too much, we own to much sympathy with this point of view. For instance, a nurse's idea of "doing" her patient's hair is to part it in the middle, and plait it in two straight plaits tied with ribbon on either side. The patient, acutely conscious, more especially as convalescence progresses, that she "looks a fright," is strongly of opinion that to dress her hair in a becoming manner, and even—low be it spoken—to be able to use the curling-tongs without burning her, is part of a nurse's duty. There is much to be said in her favour. She is unable to perform the ordinary offices of the toilet for herself, she cannot afford to employ a maid as well as a nurse. Who is to render her the necessary services if not the nurse?

Many nurses recognise this, but others hotly disclaim any obligations to perform "lady's-maid's" work, and regard a desire for Florida water or toilet vinegar, for the using of curling-tongs, and other toilet accessories as "nonsense" and "fussiness." Such a nurse has never been taught "surface nursing," and disapproves of it. A dash round her old ward with "the ward brush

and comb" (the ward tooth brush would doubtless follow suit but that in hospitals its use is almost universally honoured in the breach rather than in the observance), is all that she knows of it, yet, surely the private patient has some justification for holding that surface nursing is included in the services of a well-trained nurse.

The trouble is that we have, neither in our hospitals nor elsewhere, any system of education in the niceties of nursing, such as patients who pay for the entire services of a nurse have a right to expect. In America, most of the hospitals have paying wards, where instruction is given in the art of caring for private patients, but here little or no progress has been made in this direction, and the private nurse sent out from her training school with a thorough knowledge of what to do in medical and surgical emergencies, may yet find herself at a disadvantage because she is but ill acquainted with the niceties of the toilet. If we cannot give nurses instruction in paying wards before they undertake the care of private patients, surely it might be possible to arrange classes in surface nursing for their benefit.

An appeal signed by the Countess of Leicester, the President, and Lord Lindley, the Chairman of the Executive Committee, is issued on behalf of the Norfolk District and Cottage Nursing Federation, which is worthy of attention, as showing the attitude of the philanthropic public towards the nursing profession. They state that a highly-trained nurse as county superintendent is a pressing necessity, and add: "The ladies, who act as local secretaries, are quite competent to arrange the nurse's work in their district in a general way, and will always have complete control of her movements; but some supervision by a more highly-trained nurse is essential to keep them up to their work and to give them help in cases of difficulty."

The unfortunate nurse concerned will have, we imagine, some difficulty in deciding whether to follow the instructions of the quite competent lady who has complete control of her movements, or those of the superintendent whose supervision is essential to keep her up to her work. But what respect can the patients have for a nurse, or the nurse have for herself, when she is publicly commented upon in such terms in the local press?

The Blackburn District Nursing Association—by the generosity of Miss Thwaites, who has undertaken to defray for a year any loss the Association may incur—is prepared to supply a daily visiting nurse to patients paying a small fee weekly. We are always glad to hear of experiments in this

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