

House is supplied with plenty of papers, and a good library, which always makes life worth living. We hear that many American nurses have paid it a visit of late, and they are of opinion that they have nothing in the States of its character quite as charming and complete. We are inclined to think that private nurses owe Miss Edith Debenham a great debt of gratitude for the immense amount of thought—not to mention money—which she has expended in fitting up this delightful club-house, and we are glad to learn that Miss Bowman and Mrs. Radburn are still acting respectively as Secretary and Lady Housekeeper; it is so much more homelike to see the same kind faces when one returns home for a rest.

A year or so ago the Governors of St. Bartholomew's adopted a liberal scheme of pensions for their nursing staff—at least, we say liberal, as things go where women are concerned, as the man has got to be born who does not consider that a working woman is passing rich on a pension of a pound a week.

We are glad to see in this connection that the Committee of the London Hospital have announced a scheme of pensions for their nursing staff. The memorandum states:—"As the Committee desire to encourage suitable nurses to remain in the service of the hospital, they have decided to give every member of the nursing staff an addition of £5 per annum to her salary, after six years from the date of her entrance as a probationer. This sum will be given whether the nurse in question is fulfilling the post of a sister, staff nurse, or private nurse. After twelve years' service a second increase of £5 per annum will be given. After the expiration of eighteen years' service, at a minimum age of forty-five, all members of the London Hospital nursing staff will be eligible for pensions. The pension given will be full pay without any allowances. These pensions will be calculated on the actual average pay received during the five years previous to the sister or nurse relinquishing her active connection with the hospital. Pensions are only to be paid during the pleasure of the Committee. Any special case not coming under this heading will be considered by the Committee on its merits."

We own we do not like the wording, "only during the pleasure of the Committee." After all, the Committee of a public institution merely acts as the trustee of the public's benevolence, and if the Governors elect to pension the nursing staff we do not see where the "pleasure" of the Committee comes in. But the fact remains that these good nurses, after long and meritorious service, are to look forward to financial help from the managers—and this is as it should be.

The Chairman, Mr. Sydney Holland, in one of his innumerable correspondences, quite correctly reminds Sir Henry Burdett, the Deputy-Chairman of the so-called National Pension Fund for Nurses—who, of course, belittles real pensions as apart from his deferred annuity fund—that "only 77 nurses out of our 470 belonged to the Royal National Pension Fund, so it in no way met the pension difficulty, unless we had compelled all to join which we did not think right." Neither would it meet the pension difficulty even if the London Hospital officials had used coercion, because with their present rate of salaries very few nurses can pay sufficient into the Fund to get enough out of it to live upon. It is useful as an incentive to thrift and nothing more.

Miss Amy Hughes, who is President of Nurses in Council of the Trained Nurses' Club in Buckingham Street, presented a most interesting address of her experiences and the opinions formed by her as delegate to the International Congress at Buffalo, which ended with the following important statement:—"The chief lesson I brought home, apart from the practical and technical work, was that the American nurses take a wider view of life than we do. It is partly the result of the conditions of government and politics. When the matron of a hospital knows that her whole lay staff, from the porters to the scrubbers, will be changed with each turn of the municipal wheel, she is bound to be in touch with the men who are in control and understand something of the game. But the aim of the heads of the profession is to make their nurses sympathetic, helpful women, as well as clever graduate nurses. As I have already mentioned, they have a special danger to meet with regard to this, but they recognise it, and I fear we do not. We do not lay to heart the need of being citizens as well as nurses, not to consider our training as making us a class apart, but as one better able to enter into the lives of those to whom we must minister."

This journal has always laid great stress on the importance of nurses being encouraged to realise their public as well as their private duties; by so doing alone can they hope to reach the highest level of usefulness.

An American nurse in London writes:—

I have been over here with a patient for some months, and have been much struck with the appearance of London nurses in the streets. I mean of those who wear out-door uniform. Surely it is harmful to the reputation of the nursing profession that so many nurses are so careless of their appearance, as those one meets every day in one's walks abroad. Instead of appearing neat, trim, and clean, the majority are untidy, down at the heel, not to say dirty, and the shabbiness of the garments worn is

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