

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* * * *All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.*



important matter in these *dolce far niente* days.

Three meetings of those interested in nursing organisation will be held this week, reports of which will appear in early issues. The International Council of Nurses, the Matrons' Council, and the Executive of the Society for State Registration of Nurses are all associations the members of which have proved themselves thoroughly in earnest—no unimportant matter in these *dolce far niente* days.

The correspondence in the *British Medical Journal* on the Registration question has now been closed, and the result has shown that while many earnest women have urged the necessity of better education, followed by the registration of those nurses who have attained to a minimum standard, the only nurse who opposed Registration did so under an assumed name, so that the only avowed opponent of Registration was Mr. Sydney Holland. While the closure must at some time or other of necessity be put upon a correspondence which has aroused so much interest, we cannot help regretting that the moment should have occurred just now, when we know that several correspondents, whose views would have been interesting to Registrationists, had written to the editor. However, as the correspondence has been going on since August 15th we cannot feel aggrieved.

The present situation is summed up in a moderate leading article, which points out that there is "general agreement that something must be done," that Registration following examination by a central body is viewed with "nervous fear" by the larger training-schools lest their certificate may be stripped of some of its glamour. "Such fears are groundless; that which is good will receive recognition from a body of skilled experts, whilst unsound methods and superficial teaching will be exposed for what they are worth." Again, we read that the authorities of the training-schools "appear to lack the wide experience and the comprehensive outlook necessary for a statesmanlike grasp of the question" Perhaps the most significant remark is that which shows that the Matrons of the training-schools have not come forward, as we have a right to expect that they should, to deal with the question. In this connection it must be pointed out that many

Matrons express privately views which they hesitate to proclaim publicly, presumably because those in authority over them are, no doubt through ignorance, opposed to granting legal status to nurses. These Matrons should influence committees and medical men to take a more liberal and progressive view of nursing affairs, and should claim the right to co-operate for the better organisation of their profession, if they realise such as their duty.

The *St. John's House News* contains some interesting details of the arrangements of the House in the past. St. John's House, it will be remembered, was one of the pioneers of nursing reform, and dates back to 1848. By its Constitution it then had a "Master" and a Lady Superintendent, following probably on the model of Kaiserswerth. The Master's time in 1849 seems to have been fully occupied. His duties included the conduct of services in the chapel, a daily interview with the Lady Superintendent, "when all details about the house, nurses, &c., were discussed and settled," the daily instruction of individual nurses, instruction three times a week to the Sisters, instruction three times a week to all the probationers, and private interviews with nurses.

Nor was this all, as the following extracts from the Master's diary will show:—"Saw Treloar's man to measure hall and staircase for cocoa-nut matting"; "arranged with Clay's man about painting chapel window"; "interviewed Sarah W—, whom I admonished." Again:—"October 10th. Saw M— E—, candidate for the situation of nurse; well recommended . . . but appears too diminutive in person to discharge the duties of nurse efficiently; sent to consult Dr. Todd, who is of opinion she may come for a fortnight on trial." "December 6th. E— H— applied to enter as nurse . . . but appears self-conceited and ill-tempered. No room for such at present."

After a short time "it was found best that the Lady Superintendent should do much of the work which had at first been undertaken by the Master [We are not surprised.—Ed.], but which lay more in the province of the Lady of the House; therefore, in November, 1852, the Council agreed 'that the management of the affairs of the Training Institute hitherto devolving on the *Master* be committed to a *Chaplain* and *Secretary*.'"

The blame for any unfulfilled duty is so often placed on the wrong shoulders that we are glad that at a recent meeting of the Kingston Guardians, when the husband of a deceased patient complained that he had not received notice of his wife's death, it was recognised that the blame, if any, belonged to the Guardians. In the absence of the Steward it was supposed to be the duty of the Matron to

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