

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* * *All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.*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 case which has been widely reported in the press, in which the death of the patient was accelerated by the presence of a foreign body—*i.e.*, a pair of forceps left in the abdominal cavity after operation—draws attention to the necessity for system in the accurate counting and checking of instruments and sponges before and after an operation of this kind. In the present instance a sponge was also left in the cavity, but it was missed and recovered, presumably because the Sister in charge of the sponges counted them before the abdominal wound was closed. The instruments were not counted, and, therefore, a small pair of forceps used was not missed until the patient's condition necessitated a second operation. The lesson of the case is that at all operations the instruments used should be accurately noted and afterwards checked, and that one person should from first to last be responsible for them. We are inclined to think that such a duty should be placed in the hands of a permanent officer, and that house surgeons, who usually hold office only for six months, and who, if they do their work thoroughly, are very hard-worked persons, should not have this responsibility placed upon them. In a small hospital, it appears to us, the Theatre Sister is the best person to whom to entrust this duty, for women are not only exceedingly accurate, but they take such responsibilities very seriously. In a large hospital, either the Theatre Sister or the curator should be the responsible person. In abdominal operations, before the wound is closed, whoever has charge of the instruments should count them, and then, before they are removed, the accuracy of this count should be checked by the house surgeon.

Mr. Schwann recently asked the President of the Local Government Board in the "House" what steps, if any, had been taken to deal with the report of the Departmental Committee on Nursing which was made in November, 1902, and whether the recommendations of the Committee in that report were to be adopted as they stand. Mr. Long replied that, as stated in the reply given to the honourable member by his honourable friend, the Secretary to the Local Government Board, on April 21st, after the report of the Departmental Committee on this subject was made, he received a considerable number

of representations on points relating to their recommendations. He had caused these representations to be brought before the Committee, who had duly considered them. He was now in possession of the views of the Committee, and would shortly decide precisely what course should be taken in the matter. We hope one result of this reconsideration will be the suppression of the "qualified nurse."

At a recent meeting the common seal of the Lambeth Board of Guardians was affixed to the certificates of cookery granted to those probationer nurses at the infirmary who have passed their examination.

The annual report of the Millom District Nursing Association, of which Mrs. C. B. Myers is President, shows a very satisfactory financial condition. The year closed with a balance to the reserve account of £30 ls. 10d., and to the general account of £23 ls. 3d. The Committee record their satisfaction that they still retain the services of Nurse Longford and Nurse Nuttall, who continue to give the greatest satisfaction both to the Committee and to the patients they have attended. Miss Amy Hughes, the Superintendent of Affiliated County Associations, who inspected the work of the maternity nurse, expressed herself as being entirely satisfied with the way in which the nursing work was carried on, and highly commended the system of organisation of the Association.

Dr. J. W. Martin, in forwarding to the authorities his report on the annual examinations of the nurses at the Sheffield Union Infirmary, expressed his pleasure that there was no falling off in the excellent teaching given to nurses in the infirmary. "What pleases me most," added Dr. Martin, "in the instruction given, is that it is altogether practical, and does not tend to carry them out of the proper sphere of nursing, which I fear is too much the tendency elsewhere, and makes for mischief. An over-conceited nurse, with half-knowledge of medical subjects, or, I should say, one-eighth, is a most dangerous animal, the bane of the doctors she serves under, and a danger to the patient." We agree with Dr. Martin that practical knowledge in a nurse is most essential. We think it would tend to develop this side of the nurses' training if Dr. Martin associated a trained nurse with himself in the conduct of nursing examinations.

To meet the constantly-increasing needs of Wimbledon for trained nurses, a co-operation has been formed, with a central office at the Nursing Home, 103, Worple Road, under the management of a committee, with a resident Lady Superintendent. The Society will be affiliated to one of the London Nurses' Co-operations, so that there may be no difficulty or delay in obtaining extra help when necessary.

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