

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* * * All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.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 possibility of providing the sick at sea with efficient nursing attendance seems likely to remain in abeyance until the Regulations of the Board of Trade are altered to admit of nurses being badged as officers, given the rating of saloon officers, and the status of first saloon passengers. At present the only women recognised by Board of Trade Regulations as part of the crew are stewardesses, who rank as servants, and who are placed under the authority of the purser. Two nurses who recently answered an advertisement of a large steamship company for lady nurses in a contemporary, and were appointed, signing on the articles as stewardesses, had, as a writer in the *British Medical Journal* points out, an extremely unpleasant experience. We cannot say that we sympathise with them overmuch, because nurses should be sufficiently women of the world to know what they are doing when they enter into a contract, and if they had had any professional feeling they would never have engaged to serve as stewardesses, thus belittling their calling and placing it on a level with domestic service.

The experience of these nurses was as follows:—Engaged as stewardesses at salaries of £3 a month, they were told off to attend certain ladies' cabins. They were to sit at the children's table to have their meals, but if there was no children's table they had to go to the pantry, take what they could get, and eat it as best they could. For three nights they had a good cabin, which they had to keep clean; then, friction arising with the purser, under pretext of the ship being full they were turned out of their cabin and told to sleep in the waiting-room attached to the female baths and water-closets, with merely a curtain screening them from the public corridor, and with the liability always of having lady passengers passing through the room. Also, they had to be up and out of the room by 6 a.m., when it was used by ladies waiting their turn at the bath, and they were not supposed to prepare for sleeping till after 11 p.m. Further, a black woman servant (head swarming) shared this accommodation with them on an absolute equality. On speaking to the captain, they were told that the Board of Trade could not compel sleeping accommodation to be found for servants.

Several serious cases—fracture of base of the skull in one of the crew, abortion and septic poisoning in a third-class passenger, and an operation for inguinal hernia—occurred during the voyage. At first the purser declined to let the services of the nurses be available; they were stewardesses on the articles. Ultimately they were allowed to volunteer for work with the surgeon in time which could be spared from their duties as stewardesses.

We have consistently pointed out to nurses the necessity of securing a proper position before undertaking work on ocean liners. The need of the services of trained nurses is indisputable, but they must be given an assured position if they are to have power to work efficiently. It follows that only women of education and refinement should be engaged, who will be in their element as first-class passengers.

Mrs. Reynolds Hole, wife of the Dean of Rochester, has unveiled a memorial tablet in the new home provided for the Sisters and nurses of St. Bartholomew's Hospital in that city. A short service was held, and in the form of dedication used by Dean Hole reference was made to the fact that the hospital was founded by Bishop Gundulf nearly eight hundred years ago. The home has been built and furnished by Mr. Thomas Hellyer Foord, of Rochester, at a cost of £5,500, in memory of his father, mother, brothers, and sister.

The War Department has acceded to a recommendation by the senior medical officer to appoint a staff of lady nurses for the Royal Arsenal Infirmary.

The district orders issued by Sir Charles Tucker, commanding the forces in Scotland, for January 7th contain an intimation to the effect that Alexandra Nurses have been engaged for the families of the soldiers and sailors in Edinburgh, Piershill, and Leith; and that their services are available on application to the medical officer in charge of married families, or to the nurses themselves at their addresses. These nurses will visit the quarters daily.

We note that some dissatisfaction is felt in Edinburgh at the decision of the Committee of the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, to select its own nurses, and to train them for a period of three years, a decision with which we are entirely in sympathy. But two important institutions are affected by this new regulation—the Scottish Branch of the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses, who, under the old regulations, were accorded twelve vacancies for probationers, and the City Hospital, which hitherto has sent its nurses to the Royal Infirmary for general training. In regard to the Jubilee Nurses, surely the difficulty can be met by selecting nurses who

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