

## 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*\*\* All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.*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 treaty which is of special interest in view of the probable outbreak of hostilities between Russia and Japan is that which was signed at The Hague in July, 1899, amongst the signatories being England, Russia, and Japan.

Ships assigned by States solely for the purpose of assisting the wounded, sick, or shipwrecked cannot be captured while hostilities last, provided that the names of such ships shall have been communicated to the belligerent Powers at the commencement of, or during the course of, hostilities. Hospital ships equipped by private individuals or recognised relief societies are also privileged.

Hospital ships must not hamper the movements of the combatants, and must act at their own risk and peril. They are to be painted white, with a horizontal band of green about a metre and a half in breadth. Further, the religious, medical, or hospital staff of any ship is inviolable, and its members cannot be made prisoners of war.

We have been somewhat amused to observe that the question set rolling in this journal—"Is beauty a boon to nurses?"—has been widely commented upon in the daily and weekly Press. The poor "gargoyles" are sincerely commiserated, and with one accord the commentators acclaim their faith in "beauty" as eminently desirable in a trained nurse. One could wish that subjects of real value to nurses and the public might receive the same amount of publicity, but evidently the public taste is not in a serious vein.

During the past year 6,618 poor patients were nursed in their own homes by the Plaistow Maternity Charity and District Nurses Home's staff of ninety-nine nurses, while 2,241 persons were attended as out-patients. This is the largest total of any year in the charity's history. The nurses work in Plaistow, Canning Town, West and East Ham, and Little Ilford, districts practically devoid of hospital accommodation.

The National Association of Masters and Matrons recently sent a deputation to the Council of the

Poor Law Unions Association of England and Wales, asking its support in maintaining the old position of workhouse Masters and Matrons, the vexed question, of course, being the increased powers which it is contemplated should be given to Superintendent Nurses. We sympathise to some extent with the workhouse Matrons. Dual control is always productive of friction, but the remedy lies, as we have often pointed out, in appointing to the responsible position of workhouse Matron women specially qualified to supervise the work which comes under their control, not solely on the ground that they are the wives of the Masters. The office of workhouse Master and Matron should be dissociated for the future, and as Matrons' posts fall vacant should be filled by trained nurses with experience of administrative work.

At a recent meeting of the Committee of Management of the Royal Portsmouth, Portsea, and Gosport Hospital it was announced that the profits during the past year had run into hundreds instead of twenties. The profit was given at £300, but it was pointed out that against this the nurses' keep while in the hospital must be deducted, also the cost of their uniform.

It was agreed to give the nurses a bonus, increasing with their length of service. This does not, however, meet the requirements of justice, as no institution should make a profit out of the work of its private nursing staff. The suggestion that "the Matron should also receive recognition from the funds is to be deprecated." If the Matron undertakes the additional work of supervising the private nursing staff, this certainly should be recognised, and an inclusive salary be paid her, not a kind of bonus on the private nurses' earnings.

The Clerk to the Local Government Board has replied, in answer to a communication from the Guardians of the Ecclesall Bierlow Union inquiring whether it is competent to the Guardians to require their Superintendent Nurse to attend Divine service at the workhouse chapel on Sunday morning:—"The Board direct me to state that it does not appear to them that attendance at service at the workhouse chapel can reasonably be held to form part of the duties of a Superintendent Nurse." The answer is a wise one from all points of view. Unwilling and compulsory attendance at chapel can benefit no one.

We have before alluded to the withdrawal of nurses from the Smallburgh Workhouse by Miss Hamond, Lady Superintendent of the Fakenham Nurses' Home, on the ground of the unsanitary condition of the House. The Board, in reply to a communication addressed to them, have received a

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