

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* * * All communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, not for publication, but as evidence of good faith, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, W.



At the gathering of nurses at St. Bartholomew's Hospital on Saturday congratulations were numerous, owing to the professional promotion of so many members of the League. The Royal Free, Great Northern, West London, Queen Charlotte's, New Hospital for Women, Samaritan Free, and the Royal Chest Hospitals, all having recruited their new Matrons from

this famous Nursing School.

The announcement of the resignation of Miss Winifred Plum, the Matron of the Victoria Hospital, Folkestone, by medical advice, will be received with great regret by her many friends. We hope that after a period of rest Miss Plum will be able to resume active work.

The question of the issue of passes to nurses at the Camberwell Infirmary for the purposes of attending early services was recently discussed by the Camberwell Guardians. Clause c., item 3, of the Report adopted at the last meeting of the Board provides that the applications of the nurses for passes to attend early services should be made through the Ward Sisters.

On behalf of the Infirmary Visiting Committee, Major Thornhill submitted for approval a recommendation that this clause be rescinded, and that application for such special passes be made to the Matron in the usual way, as before.

Mr. Gauntlett said that the recommendation was the result of a strong protest from the Matron. The Committee did not understand that in passing the recommendation they were reversing the order of things which had hitherto obtained.

The Rev. W. Conybeare thought that no obstacle should be placed in the way of nurses attending any place of worship. It is, however, denied by the Matron that she has ever placed any obstacle in the way of the nurses. The matter was eventually referred back to the Infirmary Committee.

In our view liberty to attend early services, when consistent with the interests of the sick, should be freely accorded to nurses, but as the responsibility for the efficiency of the nursing arrangements rests with the Matron, the issues of passes should, unquestionably, also rest with her.

In a collection of addresses given to medical students, nurses, and practitioners of medicine, entitled "Æquanimitas," Professor Osler asks concerning the trained nurse: "Is she an added blessing or an added horror in our beginning civilisation?" He replies that she is a blessing, "with, of course, certain limitations." One of these is the want of what Sir Thomas Browne calls "the virtue of taciturnity"; it is only fair to say, however, that in this she is held to be little worse than the doctor who, both among his fellows and among lay folk, is said to be much too fond of "talking shop." He adds a word also as to the danger of half-knowledge. "With the fullest kind of training," Dr. Osler says to nurses "you cannot escape from the perils of half-knowledge, of pseudo-science—that most fatal and common of mental states." The nurse in her daily work involuntarily catches the accents and learns the language of science, often without a clear conception of its meaning. Of the result of this he gives an amusing example. "I turned incidentally one day to a very fine example of the nurse learned, and asked in a humble tone what the surgeon, whom I had failed to meet, had thought of the case, and she promptly replied that 'he thought there were features suggestive of an intracanalicular myxoma'; and when I looked anxious and queried, 'had she happened to hear if he thought it had an epiblastic or mesoblastic origin?' this daughter of Eve never flinched; 'mesoblastic, I believe,' was her answer. She would have handed sponges—I mean gauze—with the same *sunny frown* at a Waterloo."

The conclusions arrived at by Dr. Robert Boxall in a paper on the Mortality of Child-bed, read before the Obstetrical Society of London, are of interest to nurses and midwives, as showing the influence of good nursing on this mortality. Dr. Boxall compared the records of the York Road Lying-in Hospital with those of the Registrar-General for London, England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland. In spite of the fact that many severe cases are sent to the hospital, its death-rate is much lower than that recorded by the Registrar-General. Further, while the death-rate from childbirth has not declined throughout the United Kingdom, in London it has declined considerably. The same thing applies to puerperal septic diseases.

Drawing attention to these facts the *Lancet* says:—"It is most interesting and encouraging to note that the total death-rate in these cases is diminishing in London, and we may justly draw the conclusion that the stricter training of both students and nurses is at last bearing some fruit. No doubt in Ireland the ignorance of the midwives and the difficulty of obtaining proper medical attendance are both very great, and this may well explain the abnormally high death-rate prevalent in that country.

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