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Contents.

EDITORIAL.—REAL PENSIONS FOR NURSES	193
OBSTETRIC NURSING. BY OBSTETRICA, M.B.N.A....	194
PRACTICAL LESSONS IN ELECTRO-THERAPEUTICS. * BY ARTHUR HARRIES, M.D., AND H. NEWMAN LAWRENCE, MEMBER INSTITUTION ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS	196
PRIZE ESSAY COMPETITION.—XVI. BY EMILY LOUISA SYMONDS	197
NURSING ECHOES. BY S. G.	198
WOMEN AND THEIR WORK. BY VEVA KARSLAND	200
OUR INSTITUTIONS.—THE SCARBOROUGH TRAINED NURSES' INSTITUTE AND HOME HOSPITAL	202
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR	203

EDITORIAL.

REAL PENSIONS FOR NURSES.

OUR readers will have observed with considerable pleasure the decision to which the General Council of the British Nurses' Association has arrived, to commence forthwith a Pension Fund. In many ways, and for many reasons, we regard this decision as most noteworthy. We have frequently pointed out in these columns—in relation to the so-called National Pension Fund for Nurses, which is simply an expensive insurance office—that there are comparatively few Trained Nurses who are so friendless and forlorn, so destitute of relations and resources, that they will be homeless and helpless when they are no longer able to work; and, furthermore, that these few Nurses are, from the very fact that they are dependent solely upon their small salaries, quite unable to save sufficient now to make adequate provision for the future. In other words, Nurses who have no reason whatever to fear want or privation, can perhaps afford to invest their spare cash in subscribing for an Annuity; but those who will most urgently require help, because they are destitute, can, when past work, only be assisted by a freely given Pension.

These facts are well known to all professional people, and it is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the British Nurses' Association proposes by its scheme to recognise these facts, and act upon them. It is probable that the Association has commenced what will be a real, genuine, and most useful scheme of help for those who are most deserving of assistance. It is announced that the Association, from its invested Funds, will, in future, give two Pensions, of £20 a year each, to Members who may be in need of such assistance.

We do not know the reason, but it is a well-known fact that the amount in question is one which is very commonly given by various Pension Societies in this country. We understand that, while it is avowedly too small a sum for anyone to live upon, it is a most valuable addition to the small annuities which may already be possessed by worn-out governesses or other impoverished gentlewomen. But, as we have previously said, and, from considerable information on the subject, we imagine that most Nurses who need any help in their old age require complete help; and that, therefore, it will be found that, in most cases, a larger sum than that mentioned will be required to give adequate assistance. We express this opinion, however, in all deference, because, doubtless, the matter has been most carefully considered by the Committee of the Association.

We take the earliest opportunity of congratulating the Association both upon the wisdom of its scheme, and upon the financial strength which it must possess at this early period of its history, to be able to undertake so great an expenditure. Because it will clearly require an invested sum of at least £1,000 to be placed aside for this purpose. But we would fain hope that the example thus set may be widely imitated, and that benevolent people may, as time goes on, be persuaded to found, under the auspices of the Association, other Pensions for Nurses, in constantly increasing numbers.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)