

Nursing Echoes.



Sir Alfred Lyall presided at a special meeting of the Charity Organisation Society at Denison House, S.W., on Monday, to consider the question of "Provident Nursing," when Miss Amy Hughes, General Superintendent, Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute, read a paper on the subject. Miss Hughes said it was evident, in tracing the early development in the last century, that the mediæval idea of nursing the poor as an act of charity was revived, and all the original associations were founded on this basis. Gradually, however, the feeling had grown and spread that even in nursing any tendency to pauperisation was a mistake. Miss Hughes was of opinion that a system of payments per visit had interfered greatly with the value of nurses' work among the poor. In introducing provident methods it was necessary, she said, to study local conditions. In industrial centres nursing associations were mainly supported by weekly payments on wages, collections in workshops, etc. In some fishing districts the "boats" contributed annually. It was good social economy for the skilled nurse, specially prepared for the needs of her patients, to visit the home, and, while nursing the invalid, educate the family not only in domestic hygiene and the general laws of health, but also in the principles of self-respect and self-help. District nurses had not time to study the scientific aspect of social economics, but it was for the students of this subject to come forward and join hands with the nurses and help them to use aright their unique opportunities.

We think, however, it is most important that district nurses should study social economics, and be drawn from a class capable of grasping the social and economic principles underlying their work. Work done by rule of thumb has never the same force as that which is performed intelligently and with a clear knowledge of fundamental principles.

The outcome of the meeting was that a resolution was passed expressing the desirability of appointing a committee consisting of representatives of nursing associations in London, clergy, and others with the object of extending the area of provident nursing and considering the means of doing so. It will be an interesting experiment.

Slowly the large training schools are getting into line in regard to the preliminary training of probationers. The first to establish a preliminary course was the Royal Infirmary, Glasgow, on the initiative of Mrs. Strong. The London Hospital, the Leicester Infirmary, Guy's Hospital, and the Royal Infirmary, Bristol, have followed suit, and now St. Thomas's Hospital will shortly establish its own preliminary school.

The advantages of a preliminary training school are twofold. The pupil is grounded in the elements of her work before she is required actually to perform it, and her suitability is also tested before she enters the wards. The work in the wards is thus rendered more systematic and more efficient, when the manifestly unfit are eliminated in the preliminary home instead of when performing practical work in attendance on the sick.

The larger question as to whether each hospital should maintain its own preliminary school, or whether it is desirable that this education should be centralised, is still a question on which professional opinion varies.

We understand that the whole of Troop A of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry Corps have resigned, and have presented their reasons for doing so in writing to the Council of the Corps, signed by each of the twelve members. The truth is that there has been considerable dissatisfaction felt by the Troop for some little time in regard to the management of the affairs of the Corps, and they have adopted this method of giving expression to it.

General Sir Charles Burnett on Saturday, June 26th, presented badges to about 120 nurses of the East Lancashire division of the Territorial Force at the Manchester Royal Infirmary. Colonel Coates, who presided, said the ceremony marked the completion of the *personnel* of the medical service of East Lancashire. Sir Charles Burnett, who expressed his thanks to the Matron of the Infirmary, Miss Sparshott, for organising the nursing staff, spoke of the improvement that had taken place in the medical service during his experience of military life. When he joined the army the only nursing the sick or wounded soldier could get was that of an untrained comrade. He did his best, no doubt, but his best was a very poor substitute for the gentle attendance of a woman. If the men of the nation did their duty with the same self-sacrifice and bravery as were displayed by the nursing sisters there need be no fear for the safety of this country.

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