

Nursing Echoes.



Christmas is drawing near, and the charitable are already hard at work providing gifts, and entertainments, for those who otherwise would have a sad time. Some of the dreariest people in this world are those who have seen better times, and are too sensitive to claim a bit of extra happiness at what should be a festive time for all. These are the people to seek out, and, if possible, brighten up. Many are undeserving, but, for that reason, all the more to be commiserated.

Archdeacon Sinclair writes from the Chapter House, St. Paul's, to press as strongly as possible the claims of the Poor Children's Yuletide Association, which aims at providing Christmas gifts for the poorest children of the slums of our crowded cities. Last year by its work 128 Christmas trees and 60,537 toys went to gladden the hearts of the children of the very poor, many of whom hardly know what Christmas means. It is the earnest wish of the Association to materially increase the gifts if possible. All information will gladly be given by the Hon. Secretary of the Association, care of the Ragged School Union, 32, John Street, Theobald's Road, W.C.

The Asylum Officers' Superannuation Bill has been read a third time and passed in the House of Lords, and will thus speedily become law. The prolonged session has made this useful bit of legislation possible. The pension age of both male and female officers is fifty-five. In these days, when everyone is so much more active than formerly, owing to living brighter lives, the pension age seems a sensible one. We know of many hospital sisters who, when compulsorily retired at sixty, are bright and energetic women, who much resent being relegated to the shelf.

The Asylum Workers' Association, which was primarily responsible for this useful measure, and Sir William Collins, its able pilot through the House of Commons, are warmly to be congratulated upon the success which has resulted from their efforts to benefit asylum officers.

Poor Law nurses, mental nurses, and Army and Navy nurses can now all claim provision for old age, through various Government Departments upon easy terms, and hospital

nurses alone have to pay the whole insurance value for an annuity if they choose to do so, through the National Pension Fund for Nurses. Some day, perhaps, hospital nurses will organise and obtain more liberal terms for themselves. At present they know so little of business that they are helpless.

At the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Registered Nurses' Society, held last week, sixteen new members were elected on probation. As quite half of the earnings of trained nurses in private work is now absorbed by the hospitals, with private nursing departments, it is the duty of certificated nurses who realise the injustice of this exploitation to work loyally together on co-operative principles, and thus earn enough to save for the future. They should point out to every medical man with whom they work how unfair the farming out system is. Doctors in general practice are free to employ co-operation nurses which, to judge from the following reply, the honorary staff of the big hospitals are not.

Speaking to a well-known consulting surgeon recently, we brought to his notice the "my fees my own" basis on which Nurses' Co-operations are founded, and asked him to employ nurses so associated. He replied: "I give my work to my own hospital; the Committee expects it; surgical technique is now so costly that the staff must help to finance the hospital!"

"And do you consider sweating the nurses a justifiable means of paying for it?" we asked, hotly, we admit.

"I think it a mistake for nurses to become an overpaid class of worker!"

Needless to say this gentleman is an ardent anti-registrationist.

On the other hand many medical men are in warm sympathy with trained nurses making a living wage, for few ever do more. Anyway, let those who are members of co-operations play the game and co-operate, and forget the old shibboleth of "me" and "my."

Mr. William Hussey Walsh, the Organising Secretary of the Spanish Red Cross Society, 6, St. Swithin's Lane, E.C., informs the press that the Spanish-Riff war in Africa is still dragging on, and each week unhappily adds to the large total of soldiers who are victims to the carnage of a modern campaign. The long list of difficulties always encountered by the ambulance division in war has been greatly augmented (during October) by fevers and torrential rain. The Spanish Red Cross Society, of which General Marquese Polavieja is Director-General, is now unable to fully cope with the

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