

Nursing Echoes.



Mr. Arthur Lucas, Chairman of the Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street, W.C., and Mr. John Murray, Vice-Chairman, draw attention in the press to the fact that in connection with the fire in Guildford Street, W.C., on Friday night, "a fearful catastrophe was narrowly averted by the prompt action of the Matron of this Hospital (Miss Gertrude Payne) and the Fire Brigade, helped by a merciful change in the direction of the wind. The Matron happened to observe the fire about 10 p.m. She immediately telephoned to the Fire Brigade and called all the resident medical staff to fire-quarters." In order to emphasise the risk incurred, the writers point out that "adjoining the walls of the hospital is a large wood-yard, stored to a great height with dry timber. Next to these timber stacks are the sheds in which the fire broke out. Had the wind been blowing continuously from the east nothing short of a miracle could have saved the hospital. As it happened, the wind changed after the fire had broken out." The nursing staff, who are trained in fire drill, acquitted themselves bravely, a number of them, from the roof of the Out-patients' Hall, pouring water from the hoses placed there on to the timber.

It is announced that the holding of a meeting at the Mansion House is under consideration, to receive and consider a report as to what form or forms the Memorial to Miss Florence Nightingale shall take. One thing is certain, that the universal desire for a statue in the Metropolis as part of the Memorial, is too strong to be gainsaid.

In the early months of the year a large number of annual meetings of hospitals and nursing institutions are held, and they are now in full progress. As regards the nursing the reports are almost invariably the same, emphasising the good work done by the nursing staffs and the absolute necessity of skilled nursing as the complement of modern medicine. At the same time, we regret to say, especially in the case of district nursing associations, the financial question is often one of anxiety. When fully-trained nurses are employed we are of opinion that the philanthropist can nowhere get better value for his money than by the support of the

work of district nurses, and it is presumably because that work does not attract attention through costly buildings, but is carried on unseen in the homes of the poor that its claims are so often overlooked by the benevolent.

Take, for instance, the work of the Society for the Providing of Nurses for the Sick Poor in Belfast. The Lady Mayoress, Mrs. R. J. M'Mordie, stated she did not think there was any charitable institution in the city that deserved more support than the Nurses' Society. They had a great many hospitals, but they did not altogether meet the requirements of the public, for, when a case came in, the patient had to soon give way to a more urgent one. Such patients had need of nursing, and they could not get it except for the society's existence. It was with a distinct pleasure that the patients looked forward to the daily or weekly visit of the nurse. The visits of the nurses into poor houses were of great educational value. The members of the household could see simple remedies applied, and could learn the advantages of cleanliness and other things. She felt a sympathy for the mothers who did not like to leave the homes to go to hospital. It was not always a foolish or sentimental objection, for they wanted, not for their own especial benefit, to see after their homes, and to keep control of the monetary affairs of the household.

Miss Wood, who has been district nursing in Bishop Auckland for the last seventeen years, in presenting her annual report of her work and that of her staff, made a novel proposition, as follows:—Instead of a jumble sale, I propose we have a "May Day rag day," so that on May Day, or any other day, about spring cleaning time, more convenient to donors, I shall be pleased to receive any old rags, such as old white quilts, sheets, pillow cases, bolster cases, toilet covers, bath and hand towels, old flannels, handkerchiefs, underclothing, stockings, dressing gowns, nightgowns, shirts, night caps, tablecloths, serviettes, and, in fact, any old rags we shall be most grateful for. Any old clothing, boots, etc., would also come in useful for giving away. The smallest scraps of anything will be made use of. Miss Wood records with regret the loss through death during the year of a member of the staff. She had had chest trouble through asthma for some years, and after a drive in the middle of a bitter cold night and two previous nights on duty she was attacked with broncho-pneumonia and succumbed within a week.

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