

NURSING ECHOES.

A meeting of the Poor Law Infirmary Matrons' Association was held on August 11th, at the New Infirmary, Edmonton, when Miss Dowbiggin kindly provided chairs under a shady tree, where the meeting was held; and where, later, tea was enjoyed. The Hon. Secretary read a short paper on the National Insurance Bill in connection with nurses, and explained the difficulty there was in discovering how nurses training in Poor Law institutions would be affected by it. She urged all members to be on the alert to safeguard the nurses' interest, and to obtain representation for nurses on the future Health Committees. After tea, the question, "As to the Sisters' responsibilities in training probationers," was discussed. This proved an interesting subject, and various forms of quarterly reports, and methods of recording nurses' work were considered.

Nurses will endorse the opinion of Dr. Gore, Bishop of Birmingham, who, speaking at the annual dinner of the British Medical Association in Birmingham, as reported in its official organ, said:—"We clergy constantly go into houses where someone has died, and we are told in a phrase that is intended to be pious that it has pleased God to take So-and-so. We may know something about the case; we may know that the man died because he had totally misused his vital powers through drunkenness, or whatever it may have been, so that it would be much truer to say, 'It pleased him to take himself out of human life.' Or it may have been that we allowed him to be born, and to be brought up, and to work under conditions which made healthy human life impossible; so that it would be truer to say, 'It pleased us to send him off.' There are some old words which always live in my memory as being profoundly true: 'Never did any human misery arise of itself.' That is profoundly true sentiment. I believe that there is nothing which is actually of greater importance than that we should awaken the conscience of man to the fact that the great mass of disease which weakens and degrades human life is evitable—is to be resisted and can be put down."

On the same occasion the Lord Mayor of Birmingham told an amusing tale of a so-called nurse, which, incidentally, illustrates the assurance of ignorance, and the need for the adoption of a minimum standard of professional education for nurses. Suggesting that doctors might

sometimes be more explicit in their directions to patients, and patients' friends, he said:—"I well remember the case of one leading doctor who told a poor woman whose husband was very ill with some cardiac affection, 'Now you must give him this medicine in a recumbent posture.' When he had gone she went to a neighbour and asked if she could lend her a recumbent posture. The neighbour said, 'I have not got one. I have not had an illness in our house for years, but if you go to the schoolmaster's wife, she used to be a nurse, and perhaps she will have one.' When she went to this so-called old nurse and asked for a recumbent posture, she said, 'Well, I used to have one, but I lent it so many times that they broke the handle off, but I have an old mug if that will do.' That only goes to show how careful you should be. You should suffer fools gladly, and speak according to the intelligence of the patients' friends."

We are informed on good authority that the circumstances which led to the vacancy in the post of Lady Superintendent at the General Infirmary, Chester, have resulted in the resignation of the Chairman, Mr. B. C. Roberts, the Assistant Matron, and five Sisters. The Lady Superintendent, Miss Addis, who went to the Infirmary nine years ago, during which time she has received no intimation that the Board of Management were dissatisfied with her work, was suddenly called upon to resign. Though this extreme step may be necessary in the interests of an institution in exceptionally grave circumstances, it is never necessary, and it is contrary to elementary justice, that the resignation of any official of a public institution should be called for without acquainting him or her with the reasons which have actuated the decision; moreover, the official involved has the right to claim an opportunity of replying personally or by proxy to the charges (if any) which are preferred against him.

That this rule was not followed in the case of Miss Addis is evident from the fact that the Chairman, who was absent from the meeting of the Board which called for her resignation, subsequently informed the Board of the Chester General Infirmary that its action in this respect "is clearly at variance with the principles of bare justice." He considers that a course should have been adopted which would have prevented "a harmless, defenceless woman from being cast on the world without resources and without a reference."

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