

NURSING ECHOES.

The Nurses' Economic League has not yet been officially founded. The urgent need for such a League—to be affiliated later on, let us hope, to the National Council of Trained Nurses—will be discussed at the Morning Session of the Nursing Conference to be held in London on June 17th next. The scope of this League will not be restricted to attempting to secure just remuneration for private nurses on military service, but should in time become the medium for acquiring a complete knowledge of nursing economics, and of protecting trained nurses from exploitation in several directions. Trained nurses must, however, realise that they will have to co-operate unselfishly for the common good, if they hope to secure individual protection. This so far very few nurses have recognized.

Last week we made a point of attending the Nursing and Midwifery Exhibition at the Horticultural Hall, Westminster, in order to come into touch with the nurses who visited THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING Stand, and were more impressed than ever with the hopeless condition of the nursing profession generally. We do not allow that poverty is any excuse for a slovenly appearance—and we longed to have brushed a good few cloaks and bonnets; but with the spiritless appearance of many nurses who passed, their tired and dull faces, their ignorance of professional affairs—and worse still the brainless complacency of the minority—poverty may have much to do.

"I really cannot afford a penny a week for a nursing paper—we have to count every half-penny," said in effect more than a dozen nurses. "It's no use taking a nursing paper," said others, "we have no time to read it." "When I'm done, all I want is bed," said another. But the intelligent minority were all sound on State Registration. They fully realised that without an Act of Parliament to define their professional training and education, and to protect their work, any attempt to raise their status is quite futile. Which of course is the truth.

Quite a few Commandants and V.A.D. workers entered into conversation. The majority appeared to consider a professional paper superfluous. They were certified and medalled, and what more was necessary? Here is the danger. We agree with the auxiliary military hospital matron who stripped the volunteer probationers' uniform of all "exce-

scences," especially the staring Red Cross worn on the apron, and then began to give them the elementary practical instruction they required. The substitution of theory for practical ward work and clinical teaching, is the fundamental error of Red Cross nursing.

One thing was very hopeful—all the London Hospital nurses with whom we spoke confessed to being convinced registrationists, and realised the injustice of disturbing the three years' term of training, by being sent out private nursing in their third year. Indeed, so disadvantageous do the nurses find this system, that several have recently interviewed the Matron, and expressed their opinion that the third year's practical training in the wards should be consecutive, and not taken haphazard after a term of private nursing. Unless they produce evidence of having spent three years in the wards, London Hospital nurses wishing to work in New Zealand cannot now be registered. Anyway, unless emigrant nurses have to pass the New Zealand Central Examination for Registration, it is very unfair on the Dominion's nurses. Let us hope a Bill will soon be passed in this country providing for reciprocal registration—that is the only just system.

The Queen Victoria District Nursing Association in Sheffield has just held a house-to-house collection, and we hope a very handsome sum has been received.

The Queen's Nurses were started in Sheffield in 1903 when Mr. Wycliffe Wilson was Lord Mayor, and the work began in quite a small way in a little house in Gell Street, with three nurses and a working superintendent. It has grown until there are twenty-six nurses. Some of the most experienced have been called out for war service, and these have been replaced by others, whom it has been necessary to train in the particular methods of district nursing, which requires special tact.

During the last six years, Miss Hancox has, in the position of Superintendent, most ably fulfilled the task of organising the work of the nurses. She has brought this public service to a pitch of excellence where it is of great value to the city. Calls for help come through doctors, clergy, district visitors, works, sanitary inspectors, the Guild of Help, and other organisations, and any private individuals who know of cases. The Association has only two rules: There must be a doctor attending the case, and the patient must belong to the working classes.

The Association is undenominational, and is

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)