

NURSING ECHOES.

A little over a quarter of a century ago, trained nurses who desired to take up private nursing work were faced by two alternatives. They could join a private nursing institution, where the salary they received did not represent an equitable proportion of their earnings, or they could nurse "on their own," a system which had many disadvantages, because, though they might receive promises of work from doctors, the difficulties of arranging for calls to be received, and the fact that busy medical practitioners tired of sending for a nurse who, if successful, was generally engaged when they got into communication with her, was apt to result in a decreasing amount of work.

The report of the Nurses' Co-operation for 1916, 22, Langham Street, W., just to hand, shows that there are 459 fully trained nurses on the general staff, 35 asylum trained nurses for mental cases, and 22 nurses eligible for election working on probation for six months. Since August, 1914, many of the nurses have been engaged in nursing soldiers, and every endeavour is made to meet the calls of the War Office and Admiralty. With few exceptions they have kept well and happy in their work, but the committee record with sorrow the death of Nurse Jessie Ritchie at Salonica after three weeks' illness, and of Nurse H. L. Lea after two years' service in France and Egypt. The Co-operation has also lost by death Nurses Isabella Brown, Jane Macfarlane, Emma Tucker, and Mary Willes. Thirteen of the members have married, and twenty-five have resigned, their places being filled by nurses working on probation.

Owing to the war and the difficulties caused by change of staff, it has been found necessary for the present to close the Restaurant at the Howard de Walden Nurses' Club.

The Co-operation has shared in the military honours awarded to nurses, and Nurses Blacklock, Greany, Humphrey Jones, Cowie Mitchell, and Walsh have received the decoration of the Royal Red Cross.

The Balance Sheet shows that the gross receipts from patients amounted to £50,629 os. 2d., of which the sum of £47,510 11s. 7d. has been paid to nurses.

In the Report of the East London Nursing Society for 1916 the Ladies' Committee state that the shortage of nurses, and the consequent

difficulty of getting the work done, has been an outstanding feature this year, and "the thanks of the Committee and the patients are indeed due to the Matrons and Nurses who so toiled in the latter's behalf."

The year has also been one of great anxiety and difficulty in regard to the raising of sufficient funds to meet expenses, and the Report states "that there is unfortunately no sign of this burden, or of the shortage of nurses, being diminished in the near future. They are, however, greatly cheered by the knowledge of the loyalty and courage with which the Matrons and Nurses have carried out their arduous duties, and by the generous support received from old and new friends."

The Committee state, in conclusion, that, with so many proofs of sympathy and support, they face 1917 with courage, relying on the help of those who appreciate what the work of the Society represents to the sick people of East London.

A sub-committee of the Devon County Council has been appointed to deal with applications from nursing associations for grants. Every application will be treated on its merits. Where help is given towards the maintenance of a midwife it will be by way of a grant, not exceeding £1 for every patient, and 10s. for every maternity patient, the grant to be paid to the association, not the nurse.

Here is another specimen of philanthropic sweating. Under the heading of "Cornish Nurse's Strenuous Duties" the following paragraph appears in the local press:—

St. Stythian's Nursing Association held its annual meeting on Tuesday, the Rev. R. F. Moody (vicar) presiding. Mrs. Wesley Andrew (hon. secretary) reported that the year had been a very strenuous one for the nurse. In the majority of maternity cases no doctor was called in unless absolutely necessary. There had been times during the year when, owing to the patient's distance from a medical man, the nurse had been the means of saving the patients' lives by her prompt attention and experience. Several very trying cases during the spring meant heavy night work, as well as great responsibility. The working hours in April and May averaged 12 to 18 daily. Out of 11 consecutive days and nights the nurse was up for 8½ nights. An average day was supposed to consist of eight hours' work, but that had been exceeded 230 times. This year for the first time, owing to extra expenses, there was an adverse balance of about £2.

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