

NURSING ECHOES.

The Editor begs to thank all her friends who, at home and abroad, have sent her kind greetings during the past week. She appreciates them very sincerely, and heartily echoes the hope that "Our Bill" may ere long be found on the Statute Book, where it should have been inscribed twenty years ago. A little patience, and it will be found that "citizen" nurses will command consideration, where our splendid unenfranchised nurses have been ignored year after year. In a few months we shall have political power—we must use it wisely and well. The sick have suffered far too long from prejudice, ignorance, and neglect at the hands of successive Governments. We "citizen" nurses have to demand nursing reform, and see that we get it—1918 will be a very fateful year for State Registrationists—but with courage, determination, and a straight policy, we are going to win.

Our fourth War Christmas has come and gone, bringing little but sad memories to thousands of homes, where never again will all the happy dear ones meet together for fun and frolic. It is in the home circle where the tragic losses are most deeply felt, but those who passed the day in hospital, have reason for gratitude, that they were permitted to share and make bright the day for the thousands of brave cheery men who have risked death and suffering for us, and are yet full of good spirits and hope for the future.

No doubt "good cheer" is not as plentiful as of yore, but it was abundantly evident in hospital wards that the patients were well supplied, and enjoyed not only their Christmas fare and gifts, but the genuine expression of gratitude and admiration evinced by all responsible for their care. "Wish my old mother could see me now," said a young Canadian; "I'm just fine, had the jolliest day ever!" And indeed it was good to see how little these fine fellows made of past troubles, and many of them had come through pretty deep waters. "Life ain't all a summer's day anyway, even in peace time," said another; "we get a few nasty knocks per ordinaire." We do indeed. "It's not going to be 'roses, roses all the way,' even after the war," said another.

Lady Mary Trefusis, on Wednesday in last week, opened at Brighton an Imperial Club for Nurses. In the course of her speech she referred to the commemoration at the Albert Hall of the first seven Divisions, and said how the "Old Contemptibles" cheered when Queen

Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service was mentioned. She expressed the hope that the new club would be a place of rest and recreation for all the nurses in Brighton.

Under the heading of "A Red Cross Nurse's Grievance," Sir R. Melvill Beachcroft addresses the following letter to the *Times*:—

A RED CROSS NURSE'S GRIEVANCE.

SIR,—An English nurse, who happens to be in the service of a lady residing, since the war, in Switzerland, is greatly aggrieved at finding that income-tax is deducted from a small pension she has (the product of her savings) from a nurses' pension fund. She is actively engaged, with the concurrence of her mistress, in Red Cross work in a Swiss town, having charge of a Red Cross *dépôt* there for *internés*, and regards it as a great hardship that she should have one-fourth of her pension taken from her and be denied the right of claiming exemption on the ground that her total income is below the taxable limit. I have appealed on her behalf to the Inland Revenue, but the reply is that as service with the Red Cross is not service under the Crown, and the nurse is not resident in the United Kingdom, the claim for repayment cannot be entertained.

The grievance may seem a small one, and scarcely worth troubling you with, but it touches a wider and important question—namely, the status in this country of Red Cross service. May it not be long before that service is incorporated in some form or other with the Army, Navy, and Air Forces, and treated therefore as service under the Crown! Meanwhile I can but express the wish that the Inland Revenue could be induced to relax their rules under the Finance Acts so as to give relief in such a case as that quoted.

We also have letters from nurses complaining that the Royal National Pension Fund deducts a sum off their Pensions, presumably for income tax. Surely there must be some means whereby these tiny pensions of a few shillings a week could be preserved in their entirety for the benefit of the hard-working women who have pinched and screwed for so many years to pay their premiums into the Royal National Pension Fund for Nurses. Anyway, an effort should be made by its Council to do so. Incidentally, this Fund is misnamed. It is not a Pension Fund, but an Assurance Society, for which the nurses pay full market value for any benefits they are likely to receive.

Lord Provost Sir J. Lorne MacLeod presided last week at the annual meeting of the Scottish Branch of the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses, which was held at the Institute, 29, Castle Terrace, Edinburgh. The report of

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