

NURSING ECHOES.

Major Chapple, M.P., and Mr. Morris, the House Governor of the London Hospital, are doing good service towards the economic emancipation of trained nurses by their correspondence in the press. The arguments for and against the exploitation of London Hospital nurses have been inserted in this JOURNAL for the past twenty-five years, so we need not allude to it further than to commend Dr. Chapple's sound arguments, and to ask Mr. Morris how he would enjoy being compelled to refund to the Hospital half his salary in support of the charity! Of course, "Members of the London Hospital Nursing Staff" write in support of serfdom; they always do, and in their ignorant self-sufficiency they appear entirely devoid of any sense of justice to the public, their colleagues, or themselves.

But, as we have remarked elsewhere, so long as degrading conditions only harm persons who prefer them, well and good, but when they injure one's neighbour, as the depreciation of our three years' standard of training, and the competition of semi-trained nurses in private practice do, that is the reason such conditions should not be tolerated by the public or by the nursing profession.

It is rumoured that a Private Nursing Department is going to be started at St. Thomas' Hospital. So far St. Thomas' has been content to charge fees for training, which in our opinion is quite justifiable, and has held aloof—as surely Miss Nightingale would wish it to do—from exploiting its trained Nurses. Let us hope if that rumour is true that the private staff will work on the co-operative system, as the day has gone by when hospital governors can make a cent. per cent. profit on nursing labour, as at the London Hospital, without the severest criticism and condemnation. That the Hon. Sir Arthur Stanley should have promoted the commercialism of Nightingale Nurses is almost incredible after all the College protestations that it is out for the economic benefit of the Nursing Profession.

We hear many "Nightingales" are strongly opposed to the new departure, as unworthy of their School, and calculated to affect its prestige.

Nursing Schools should discourage any scheme which curtails the freedom of individual private practice after certification. A few more hospital Nurse-Farms on London lines, and free private practice, whereby trained nurses take the fees they have earned, will be rendered

impossible, as medical men educated at hospitals which run them are greatly influenced to support the finances of their Alma Mater by employing nurses attached to its Private Nursing Department.

But as so many "Nightingales" have been urged to join the College, and have signed an Agreement whereby their names can be removed from the Register of the Council—*without any power of appeal*—a Council on which the Treasurer, a lay member of the Nightingale Committee, the Matron, and a member of the medical staff have seats—we fear their objections are not likely to have much weight.

King Edward Order of Nurses in South Africa is doing good work as far as possible in these difficult times, and as the result of a discussion at the last annual meeting the Trained Nurses' Association has suggested to Lady Buxton that the good work the Order has already done might be greatly increased if special centres were established to train nurses already qualified in the duties of district nursing. The work is one for which very special qualifications are necessary, and the T.N.A. suggests that a Training Centre should be established by the Order in Cape Town or Johannesburg (or both), where applicants for district work, who must possess qualifications for general nursing and midwifery, should receive six months' special training in the duties of a district nurse, and at the same time study for the certificate of the Sanitary Institute, which she should be compelled to take.

We hope to hear this scheme has materialised. We are always pleased to note Trained Nurses' Associations offering expert advice, especially when they demand high and comprehensive standards of training. During the war, what with the interference of one ignoramus and another, and the subserviency of those who should stand firm for efficiency, we often wonder if, when peace comes, such a thing as skilled nursing will be found to exist.

Berthé Coutemache, a nurse at the Grey Nunnery Hospital at Montreal, who posed as a heroine in rescuing two children at the fire in which 65 infants perished and the lives of wounded soldiers were threatened on February 14th, has been arrested.

She has confessed that she set fire to the convent deliberately by burning newspapers in a cupboard. A month later she again set fire to the place, causing a small outbreak, which led to her arrest.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)