

NURSING ECHOES.

The Annual Report for the year 1918 of the Nurses' Co-operation shows a very successful year's work, the gross assets being £59,924 12s. 8d., and the excess of income over expenditure amounts to £410 11s. The expenses connected with the Nurses' Home and Club amounted to £2,968 12s. 1d., and as the receipts were £2,565 11s. 5d., it failed to pay its way by £403 os. 8d. The fees have been raised to a minimum of £3 3s. per week for all cases; where massage is required another guinea is added. Monthly cases range from £12 12s. to £26 5s. per month, and for mental, drug and alcohol cases, the charge is £3 13s. 6d.

No doubt, with the great increase in the cost of living, clothes, and other details, the rise in charges is necessary. But when we take into consideration that those who employ nurses have to meet increased travelling, food, and service costs, it remains to be seen, after the demobilisation of Service nurses, whether employment per nurse will continue at its present rate. What with influenza and Army employment, nurses have been at a premium, and we must await events before we can judge what effect the great cost of living will have on the employment of private nurses.

Speaking at a meeting at Holyhead, convened by the local doctors, with the object of forming a nursing association in the town, Dr. T. W. Clay said that, although they had a population of over 11,000, there was only one nurse whom they could claim. He personally believed in nurses more than in doctors. The rate of infantile mortality in England and Wales was a disgrace to civilisation. In Holyhead, in 1917, out of every 1,000 children born, 91 died, or one in every ten, through neglect in feeding.

The ceremony of unveiling a tablet to the memory of Miss Edith Cavell at Brussels, placed on the wall of the Depage School for Nurses, in the Faubourg St. Giles, took place on March 18th. Dr. Depage, so well known to so many English nurses who worked at his great hospital at La Panne, presided, and many distinguished Belgians paid their homage to our heroine.

Speaking at a meeting of the local branch of the Colonial and Continental Church Society at Norwich, the Rev. H. S. Gahan, British Chaplain at Brussels, spoke of the circumstances leading up to the death of Miss Edith

Cavell, to whom he administered Communion on the night before her death. He said: Very soon after the war began many prisoners of war escaped into Brussels from behind the German lines. At that time it was somewhat easily done, for the German administration had not then drawn its cords so tightly round the city. These escaped men came into Brussels in fair number. They were looked after by various people who combined to do so. Nurse Cavell was one who opened her heart and house to them, so numbers of these men were sent to her nursing home, where she lodged and kept them. Then by the aid of contributions she sent them by secret means to the Dutch frontier, and so eventually they got back to the fighting line. I am not sure how many men of different nationalities she helped, but I heard that she assisted 200 men back to the fighting line. I am not sure whether that number referred to British soldiers only. I rather think it represented the total of the people of all the Allied nations whom she helped. This undertaking became rather onerous as time went on, and dreadfully dangerous. By the German military code, and I believe by the military code of the other nations, anyone who helps to get prisoners of war back to the fighting line incurs the penalty of death at the hands of the enemy. Simply to help prisoners back to their own countries does not involve the death sentence, but to ensure their return to the fighting line does. And Nurse Cavell did that. She aimed at it and gloried in doing it. But what do you think? It would be enough to make you laugh if it were not so tragic. Some of these simple-hearted Tommies whom she helped to escape actually wrote postcards to her afterwards, saying that they had got safely back home. These cards came through the Brussels post, which was then in German hands. Poor fellows, they did not know. But it was enough.

"From a military point of view," said Mr Gahan, "I am afraid we must admit that the sentence was a just one. The German Military Governor who refused the appeal to the Kaiser was, however, the one mainly responsible for her death. The appeal should have been allowed to go to the Kaiser, but the Governor refused to send it. I was told on good authority that the Kaiser was exceedingly wroth when he heard it was withheld. Had the appeal gone to the Emperor, the sentence might have been commuted."

We are glad this heroic Englishwoman did not owe her life to this blood-stained instigator

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