

## NURSING ECHOES.

"The Problem of the Private Duty Nurse" is flooding American journals with "copy," and there is much food for reflection in the nurses' own letters which appear in the *American Journal of Nursing*. Some nurses are being paid twenty-eight dollars a week, but from all accounts they earn it. What with night and day duty, heavy domestic duties, such as cooking for the household, and laundry work, professional duties appear to form but part of the routine—to be considered worth their money"! In many American middle-class households domestic labour has long been a very acute problem, and one begins to wonder if the scarcity of domestics will bring home to us their value, and all the brain workers owe to them. There is no doubt during and since the war the standard of comfort has been lowered for those who cannot afford to pay double the price for service.

This is a matter private nurses will do well to consider. We hear of a great scarcity of private work, especially in London. The rise of a nurse's fee from £2 2s. to £3 3s. a week is inevitable if she is to meet the extra cost of living in every direction. This rise in fee many people are willing to pay if possible; they will also struggle to meet all other additional expense, but the first question a householder has now to ask herself is, "If I have a trained nurse, how am I going to supply the extra domestic labour? One maid instead of two or three, often no maid at all! Who is going to do the domestic work? It is no part of a trained nurse's duty. I just can't have a nurse."

So nurse has lately been living in her boxes at an overcrowded Nurses' Home!

What is going to be done about this question?

There is only a limited amount of private nursing, and if all the large hospitals continue to run Private Nursing Institutions for profit, what are the nurses going to do about it?

We have a few letters to hand on this question from Canada and elsewhere, and from them all we gather that fees are much higher than at home, and work is much harder, and if the nurse hasn't time to take a hand with the "chores," the master of the house turns to and "helps along."

This is from the *American Journal of Nursing*:—"If the panic-stricken husband and father is not able to secure the services of a cook, the nurse attends to the making of liquid

foods, broths, &c., for her patients, and swallows raw eggs and manages to gulp down the indigestible bread and boiled cabbage which the twelve-year-old child of the family has so heroically prepared, knowing that her own physical strength must be maintained to care for her charges. And she must teach the husband *not* to wash his dishes in the basin on the back porch, used for the hands (that is no fairy tale, for I've seen it done), and must instruct the twelve-year-old daughter, who is mothering a six months' old baby sister, that it is not good for the baby to administer soothing syrups to make it sleep. The nurse must prepare baby's food, and teach the child the necessity of cleanliness of nipples and bottles. And when at last the black cook does arrive (she is only entrusted with the cooking for the well ones), there are many things to be shown her, and with her help the nurse scrubs all the floors and puts the house in apple-pie order, hence teaching sanitation."

It seems as if a Ministry of Health might find a good bit to do "away, across."

Few nurses of the present generation have seen cases of hydrophobia, thanks to the stringent regulations which have freed the kingdom from cases of this most terrible disease, through the strict quarantine and supervision of dogs, for it is by infected dogs that the disease is usually disseminated. Thirty and forty years ago, however, such cases were not uncommon, and no nurse who has ever seen the agony endured by a patient suffering from hydrophobia would help to introduce a dog (however beloved) into this country in contravention of regulations made for the public safety.

It is stated in the daily Press that a nurse recently went across to France and returned the next week with a baby in long clothes. Investigations by a suspicious Customs House official proved that the "baby" was a dog. We hope, and believe, that the nurse was not one who had had hospital training and knew the possible consequences to humanity of her illegal act.

"Ierne," the anonymous male who slashes into all and sundry in the Burdett press in true "penny-a-liner" style, gives a highly imaginative account last week of what he knows nothing about! "As soon as Mrs. Fenwick read her *Hospital* (he ventures), she sat down and posted a copy to Miss Carson Rae." This is doing the quack nursing press which publishes "Ierne's" anonymous slanders too much honour. As a professional woman, Mrs.

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