

THE NIGHTINGALE FUND.

REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 25th
DECEMBER, 1920.

A Statement of the Probationer Nurses in the Nightingale Fund School at St. Thomas's Hospital for the twelve months which ended the 25th December, 1920, is given below:—

Remaining December 25th, 1919 (of whom 22 were paying Probationers and 14 Free Specials): 58.

Admitted up to December 25th, 1920, from the Preliminary Training School (of whom 14 were paying Probationers and 155 Free Specials): 72.

Resigned, or discharged as unsuitable: 12.

Completed Probationary year, and taken on as Extra Nurses to complete their training: 61.

Remaining in the Home on 25th December, 1920 (of whom 13 were paying Probationers and 15 Free Specials): 69.

Completed term of service and awarded Certificates: 49.

The work of the Training School has been carried on in the past year, 1920, without any special incident, and with all the efficiency for which the School is so well known.

In 1919 the Matron undoubtedly met with some difficulty in obtaining the right class of candidates for training, and in that year the numbers admitted to the School from the Preliminary Training School fell to 57, of whom 17 resigned, or were discharged as unsuitable; but it will be noted that in the past year the numbers admitted increased to 72, whilst only 12 resigned or were discharged, and 49 completed their Probationary year, as against 36 in 1919.

Extracts quoted from the Report to the Council for the year 1920 of Miss Lloyd Still, Matron of St. Thomas's Hospital, and Superintendent of the Nightingale School, state that:—

"The work of the Preliminary Training School has been continued on the lines hitherto reported, by Miss Coode.

"Sister Tutor reports sixty Nurses have attended the classes during the year. An inequality of standard has shown itself in this year's work, and the average is below that of former years. Interest in the actual class work has been well maintained, but fresh enthusiasm and sustained effort are somewhat lacking, possibly due to a previous acquaintance with nursing without systematic training, and to the war strain that has weakened the powers of concentration and application.

"The final examination in Practical Nursing was held in July, and was kindly undertaken by Miss Montgomery, Matron of the Middlesex Hospital, assisted by Miss Coode and Miss Hillyers.

"Forty-nine Nurses qualified for a Nightingale Certificate. Of these, one qualified for and gained a Gold Medal, and the Silver and Bronze Medals were awarded in order of merit.

"Three new posts have been created, *i.e.*, Sister Mothercraft, Sister Venereal Department for Women, and Sister District Midwife."

CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE.

MARY SMITH, FOSTER MOTHER.

Some of the most inspiring incidents in this old world's history are those that are never recorded, and among the noblest lives those that go to their graves unhonoured and unsung.

Mary Smith, a simple, homely woman lived with her aged father, until death called him and left her alone.

She might easily have become narrow, bitter, and self-centred, but instead she made the offering of her life; "Here am I, use me!"

The neighbouring Poor Law Institution was asking for foster-mothers. She had a furnished cottage. Why not? No reason at all. Every reason why she should.

So Miss Smith the spinster became "Mummy" to three little brothers and sisters whom no one else wanted.

From the first it was a success.

Your strict disciplinarian might have found something to say. Your zealous health worker might have cavilled at the cubic feet, but the heart of gold in Mary Smith's breast illumined that little cottage and wrote "Home" all over it in capital letters.

She was pathetically anxious to do the right thing by her little charges, of whom she was inordinately proud. She sacrificed time and money in order that they should not be at a disadvantage with other children.

They were charming little people, and it was whispered that they had good blood in their veins.

Dear good soul! How her feathers would ruffle at the least suggestion of harshness to her darlings.

Many a battle she fought with the school teachers. "They ain't going to treat them anyhow."

Lowering her voice confidentially she would assure her listener that the neighbours were jealous of their refined appearance and pretty ways.

She was clever with her needle, and had surprisingly good taste, so perhaps there was something in her suggestion.

Dear as all the children were, Arthur, the youngest, was the very heart of her.

He was a pretty boy with pathetic brown eyes, and his delicacy called out all her latent tenderness.

She could have talked by the hour of his affectionate ways and general sweetness of character.

Just before his tenth birthday he bought a small geranium in a pot. He informed his Mummy that it was for her grave and that he should tend it till it was required.

He stood thoughtfully by her sewing machine and said "But I don't know what I should do if you was to die. I will ask God to let me die first."

The birthday was the glad day it should be in happy homes, and Arthur and his elder brother raced home from school to go out with Mummy to buy the present.

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