

### NURSING ECHOES.

Discussing the Profession of Nursing in the *Guardian*, and commenting on Mr. Galpin's statements in a previous issue, amongst which he stated that many nurses suffer physical damage and are "broken in spirit," Miss Isabel Macdonald, R.B.N.A., writes:—"Yet the marred feet and ankles, and all the agony that goes before, are as nothing compared to the 'broken spirit.' . . . Until she has absolutely broken her own ego a nurse has little chance of finding favour with those in authority in the hospitals, with the result that there are thousands of women in the profession who are little more than automatic corpses of their former selves, with no power left to form definite opinions, to make their own choice of action. These characterless clogs in the wheels of nursing organisation are a direct menace to the well-being of their fellows, an immense obstacle in the path of those who have organised in order to press for better things. They hear the view, for instance, that a forty-eight hours working week for nurses 'would make Florence Nightingale turn in her grave.' The obvious untruthfulness of the statement should cause them to question the wisdom of the views which it supports, but it does not, for they have lived the lives of serfs and their minds have become the minds of serfs—their spirits are broken."

But there is another aspect for the consideration of those who view from a Pecksniffian altitude any determined agitation to improve conditions. Apart altogether from the physical energy required, there is an enormous effort involved, on the part of a young girl, if she is to bear the strain of being always with the suffering. Soon her self-control becomes sub-conscious, habitual, but it none the less has its effects. Always, too, she is giving of her own vitality to the sick, and added to this there is a certain strain involved by the breaking-off from what is often a very free life to one which is largely governed by routine. Such a break in the ordinary rhythm of habit does, in many cases, act prejudicially; in others the reverse is the case; but, all things considered, the result of honest thought tends to show that, quite apart from questions of supply and demand, the conditions under which nurses work should be better rather than worse than those which other women workers claim as their right."

On the invitation of the Scottish Council of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses a meeting of representatives from district nursing associations in the county was recently

held in the County Buildings, Stirling, to discuss the question of a federation of district nursing associations for the county. Lady Susan Gilmour, joint hon. secretary of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute, Scottish Branch, explained that the object of a county nursing association would be to federate all district associations, to promote their interests, and further the development of district nursing. After some discussion it was decided to postpone further consideration of the matter until the representatives could have an opportunity of reporting to their various associations.

At a meeting of the Aberdeen District Nursing Association the Chairman, Dr. William F. Croll, congratulated Nurse Macdonald on having received the Long Service Gold Badge from the Council of the Institute in London, and also Nurse Cameron on having had her name placed on the roll of Queen's Nurses.

A brisk correspondence on Street Begging for the Nurses' War Memorial is being carried on in the *South African Nursing Journal*. We note Miss B. Lazarus, Hon. Secretary of the Durban Branch of the T.N.A., thinks the editorial comments in the *B.J.N.*, which expressed our strong objection to raising funds for nurses by mendicant methods, "rather narrow-minded and somewhat ignorant." We are quite impenitent on this matter. Nothing but depreciation of status can result to any body of professional workers which adopts it. Alas! quite a number of nurses at home and abroad are quite willing to become public objects of charity. We are not amongst them.

We quote the following editorial remarks on Mental Nursing from the *American Journal of Nursing*:—

It was in 1792, in the Bicetre, in Paris, that Dr. Philippe Pinel struck the chains from the limbs of some of the unfortunate inmates. Dr. Pinel thus began a revolution in the care of the insane that, despite the clogging and hampering weight of tradition and prejudice, is still going on. What Pinel did for France, William Tuke did for England in "The Retreat" at York. It was not until the middle of the last century that Dorothea Dix began her great work with the State Legislatures in this country in the interest of better housing and better care for the insane—a work that left its impress all across the country.

In recent years the Mental Hygiene movement has gained much headway. It is a movement that is concerned with both the preven-

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