

NURSING ECHOES.

There is no time to be lost if opposition to Dr. Chapple's Prayer to the King in Council is to be opposed. Our advice to nurses who object to the General Part of the Register being thrown open, thus late in the day, to persons without any hospital training whatever, is to send a signed postcard to this effect to the Clerk of the Council, Privy Council Office, Whitehall, S.W.1., and to the Minister of Health, Ministry of Health, Whitehall, S.W.1. Catch the first post.

We hope the address on "The Value of a District Nurse in Preventive Work," by Dr. Wheatley, County Medical Officer of Health, Shropshire, delivered at a recent annual meeting of the Shropshire Nursing Federation will be widely circulated, as these County Nursing Associations are costing the public thousands of pounds annually, and are still apparently doing little to establish a higher standard of education and professional knowledge amongst village nurses, who should now be the well-instructed teachers of public health throughout rural districts.

Dr. Wheatley laid great stress on the fact that a district nurse ought to be drawn from an educated class. She should also be well trained in the laws of health and hygiene, based on physiology. In comparing a district nurse with a hospital nurse it was done simply to show that a district nurse was thrown on her own resources. She had but little supervision, and she was engaged in educating to a great extent the people with whom she came into contact, and had to use her brain in an entirely different way from a hospital nurse. For that and other reasons he thought she wanted to be a well-educated woman. They would have to realise, however, that this would only come about in time, that the district nurse would have to have a different status, and different remuneration. Speaking of the district nurse as a health visitor, he said they were great teachers of hygiene. They all said prevention was better than cure. Everyone repeated it, but very few acted upon it.

Dr. Wheatley then spoke on the detection and preventive treatment of rickets, and on the work of the visiting nurse in connection with tuberculosis, and said perhaps her work in connection with orthopædic surgery was the most important. He recognised as well as anyone that the improvement with regard to the district nurses would have to be gradual. The service required a class of a high order of

intelligence, and steps should be taken to improve their status.

After Dr. Wheatley's wisdom, it is sad to read the following expression of opinion from Dr. Haviland at the annual meeting of the East Sussex County Nursing Federation at Hastings.

Dr. Haviland is reported to have said: "With regard to choosing of women for training, it was not sufficient to choose healthy and educated women unless they considered their attitude toward nursing. Why was Mrs. Gamp so often preferred to the fully trained nurse? First, because, perhaps, she might come a little cheaper—[Only in filthy lucre. Mrs. Gamp is a very costly fraud where the health of the people is concerned.—Ed.]—and they did not have to go into so many formalities; but the chief reason was, he believed, that Mrs. Gamp was a person who had a natural aptitude and inclination for nursing, and with such people they got a sympathy which bound the nurse to the patient in a way which the more educated person, unless she had that sympathy, could not do."

Sir Francis Champneys (Chairman of the Central Midwives' Board), who presided, said in his address that he never regarded Mrs. Gamp as a really very benevolent person. She had a natural aptitude for gin, if he recollected, and, of course, that was not necessary in a midwife's equipment. The character of the woman should be of the first importance.

Alas! that the whirligig of time should have brought us to the canonisation of Mrs. Gamp. We are indeed in a parlous state! When doctors differ, however, there is some hope for the patient.

Remarkable findings as to infection, overcrowding, and scarcity of trained nurses appear in the report of Dr. Miles B. Arnold, who conducted an inquiry on behalf of the Ministry of Health into conditions at the Staines and District Hospital.

"It is very desirable," he declares, "that there should be a larger proportion of trained nurses on the staff.

"It seems probable that at times patients have been discharged whilst in an infectious condition.

"Overcrowding to the degree which occurred in the Staines Isolation Hospital brings with it grave danger that patients may be infected with some other disease than that for which they were admitted.

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