

NURSING ECHOES.

A general service medal, with clasps "Iraq," "Kurdistan," "N.W. Persia," and "S. Persia," is to be issued to those who took part in the military operations in those areas in 1919 and 1920. Applications should be made to the Secretary, War Office, S.W., in the case of officers and nurses, and to regimental record offices in the case of other ranks.

M. Strauss, French Minister of Public Health, who went to Brussels to attend the Pasteur centenary celebration, visited the Saint Gilles prison and placed some beautiful flowers in the cell occupied by Miss Cavell before her execution. Sir George Grahame, the British Ambassador, has expressed to M. Strauss his deep appreciation of this tribute to Miss Cavell's memory.

The Editor has received quite a number of anonymous letters, from illiterate persons, condemning her policy of objecting to midwives and V.A.D.s being placed upon the General Part of the Nurses' Register, with less than one year's training in a general hospital or infirmary. The Editor had sixteen years' practical experience of nursing the sick, but is not therefore qualified for registration by the Central Midwives' Board. Why, therefore, should untrained midwives be placed upon the Nurses' Register because they have had a few months' experience of nursing in a district or institution, and have been permitted to assume the title of "Nurse," to which they have no right to add "Registered." V.A.D.s are not professional nurses, but women with some training in First Aid and Home Nursing. They have their own well-defined position in connection with the Red Cross Society, and have no right to be permitted to compete with professional women as "Registered Nurses." As it is, they are taking much work away from nurses who have given many years to become efficient, in Government institutions, private nursing, and private nursing homes, at a cheaper rate than trained nurses can afford to work for. We have many letters on this question, and all our sympathy is with the conscientious working nurses who have qualified for their responsibilities, and now have their bread taken out of their mouths by persons who have grasped nursing responsibility and fees without taking the trouble to train. All that is required is a Rule for hard cases—with strict limitations and precautions—but the College demand, by those who have climbed to the top and are enjoying the highest

emoluments and pensions, that the certificated rank and file are to struggle for their lifetime for a livelihood, in competition with thousands of inefficient persons, *whose duty it was to make themselves efficient*, is, in our opinion, absolutely unjust. We believe in hard work, thoroughness, and skill, and demand that as far as possible the sick shall be protected from semi-trained attendants posing as thoroughly efficient "Registered Nurses." We hope these remarks "meet the eye" of our anonymous correspondents. Personal abuse will not alter our convictions.

At the Bath Board of Guardians meeting last week it was reported by the House Committee that as the presence of probationers from the Infirmary appeared to be resented by the nurses of the Royal United Hospital, they had decided that no more nurses be sent to the hospital for training. The report was adopted by the Board without comment.

Presumably the inclusion of short term workers from outside is found to give additional work and responsibility to the permanent staff at the Royal United Hospital, and in some measure to interfere with the routine work of the regular probationers. Organisation should be able to minimise the disadvantages, and one wonders how the system of affiliated training for the State Examination is going to work out, if general hospitals do not encourage nurses trained in infirmaries and special hospitals to come for further experience. It is a very thorny question.

If only the inmates of the Rochford Union Infirmary had tackled the bogus "Nurse Matilda" with a bass broom, a few plucky nurses would soon have discovered the fraud. As it is, the *Weekly Dispatch* reports:—

"'Nurse Matilda,' the ghost that haunted Rochford Union Infirmary in the guise of a Victorian Poor Law Sister, has been 'laid' at last by a nurse. Early in the morning one of the night nurses saw the 'ghost' approaching through the infirmary garden, and called one of the medical officers to witness the weird apparition. They waited and watched. The ghost attempted to enter the building by a window, and on being challenged turned out to be a very substantial and quite unghostlike male attendant, whose conduct will be the subject of an inquiry by the Guardians at their meeting this week. For more than a month the mysterious midnight visitor had terrorised the members of the nursing staff of this large institution. At first regarded as a peculiar kind of 'impractical' joke by a male attend-

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)