

NURSING ECHOES.

Princess Mary Viscountess Lascelles last week opened the War Memorial Home for District Nurses at Newmarket, erected out of the balance remaining after meeting the cost of monuments at Newmarket and Exning, the site being given by Major Dermot McCalmont. Her Royal Highness, who was accompanied by Viscount Lascelles and Mrs. Edward Clayton, was received and welcomed by Mr. Seymour Cole, in the absence, through illness, of the Hon. George Lambton. The Princess unlocked the main door with a silver key, presented by the architect, Mr. Leopold E. Cole, and then made a tour of inspection of the building, being particularly interested in the children's ward of six beds.

"Our Tradition—The Past," by Sir D'Arcy Power, K.B.E., his Introductory Address at the Abernethian Society at St. Bartholomew's Hospital on October 18th, appears in *St. Bartholomew's Hospital Journal*.

It is, like all hospital history, of wonderful interest, and alludes to the Patients, the Hospital as a Place of Healing, the Professional Staff, the Students, and the Nurses. Of the latter he writes:—

"The nursing tradition is continuous. It extends unbroken for a single moment since the Hospital was founded in 1123 until the present day, and a very noble one it is.

"Professed Sisters for the first 400 years, the nurses lived entirely for and in the Hospital, sometimes bequeathing to it any little savings they might have acquired. The religious habit was abandoned with the Reformation, but the scheme of their life seems to have changed but little. The profession was practically for life, and all the Sisters slept together in one room, from which they were not allowed to come out at night except upon most special occasions. This common dormitory continued until 1787, when the Sisters were assigned the small room partitioned off from their ward, which they still use as a bed-sitting-room. Even to our own time many of the Sisters have served the Hospital and often the same ward for 30 years and more. Think of the knowledge that they had gained by experience in that time. It is well exemplified by the story Sir William Church tells of one of his old Sisters, who used to say: 'There's a many who comes into this ward and dies and the young doctor don't know what he dies of, and there are others who die and the physician

don't know what he dies of, and there are some as comes in and even I don't know what he dies of.' It is a standing wonder to patients who are not very ill and can watch the work in the ward how it is that so much can be done in so orderly and pleasant a manner. My answer is TRADITION."

How interesting it would be to compile a book of the historettes of Great Sisters! There have been many such—women of noble character and strong personality. In our experience we can recall hospital Sisters of great charm, individuality, and accomplishment. It is a pity their example is not available for the general benefit of the profession. We want Sister Historians as well as Sister Tutors.

We have received several inquiries from Superintendents of Private Nursing Societies *re* fees, and the following letter embodies two of the most important points requiring an expression of opinion:—

"Dear Madam,—Having for quite a number of years been at the head of a Private Nursing Institution, where the staff work either on salary or on the co-operative system, it would be interesting to know your experience on the following points:—

(1) What is to be done when patients or their friends fail to pay the fees for nurses' services. It is now no uncommon thing to have to wait weeks for fees, and, indeed, for patients in hotels and flats to depart and never pay. The cost and trouble of placing the matter in the hands of a solicitor seems equally hopeless, as, even if he gets judgment, unless the patient has something to distrain on, one never gets the money. You would be surprised to know the names of people who, moving in Society, do not hesitate to deprive the nurse of her hard-earned fees.

Then (2) nurses, on their part, often fail to realise what co-operation means, and after being with a case for some time, think nothing of resigning and taking on the case for their own personal benefit. Surely this is very dishonourable conduct. I wonder if you would express an opinion in the *B.J.N.*—always the voice of Justice."

We have pleasure in giving our opinion. During the past few years great changes have taken place in private nursing. Before the war a private nurse was well employed at a salary of £2 2s. a week and all found. She often remained some weeks as nurse and com-

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