

### NURSING ECHOES.

An interesting ceremony took place at the Council Meeting of Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses on Wednesday, July 18th, when H.R.H. Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, presented Long-Service Badges to three Queen's Nurses who had earned this badge by twenty-one years' loyal work in connection with the Institute. Owing to the distance and the difficulty of leaving the districts, some of those who were entitled to badges were unable to be present, but it was a great pleasure to the Council to welcome Miss Ellinor Smith, who is the Institute's Superintendent in Wales; Miss Florence Bell, County Superintendent for Devonshire; and Miss Elizabeth Peacock, who is Queen's Nurse at Liscard and New Brighton. Her Royal Highness, in presenting the badges, spoke to each of the recipients about the work she was doing, and congratulated them upon their long and faithful service.

It is satisfactory to learn from the Report submitted to the Council by the Executive Committee that the work is progressing satisfactorily. Twelve Nursing Associations have been affiliated since the last meeting, and the names of seventy-eight nurses have been added to the Roll of Queen's Nurses. The reports received on the various districts from the Inspectors show that the general standard of the work is very high. The chief difficulty is in regard to finances: By strenuous efforts a sufficient amount has been raised to carry on the work till the end of 1923, and the Council is now engaged in trying to evolve some means of placing the financial position on a more permanent basis.

One of the principal purposes of the visit of the Duke and Duchess of York to Liverpool this week is to lay the foundation-stone of the Nurses' Home at the Royal Infirmary, where their welcome is assured.

It is interesting to note in the last Annual Report a reference to the Nurses' Homes in Ashton Street, which were the outcome of the late Mr. William Rathbone's desire to get nurses who would nurse the suffering poor in their own homes. He found one, but could not succeed in getting others. He consulted Miss Florence Nightingale, who suggested that instead of applying to London for trained nurses Liverpool had better form a school to train nurses in its own hospitals. The Royal Infirmary had no facilities then for training. Mr. William Rathbone was asked to become a member of the Infirmary Committee, and he,

finding that the greatest difficulty in starting a training-school was that the Infirmary could not accommodate either the nurses or probationers, undertook to build a School and Home, of which Liverpool has reaped the benefit for the last sixty years.

At the Annual Meeting, when moving the adoption of the Report, the President, Dr. Thomas H. Bickerton, said, "Salaries and Wages show an increase, due to the raising of the salaries of the Nursing Staff." In my opinion, we are getting good value for this increased expenditure. What is the use of an Infirmary with every up-to-date appliance and equipment without efficient and sufficient nurses. In the year 1844, before Florence Nightingale had begun to make her wonderful presence felt, there were in the Infirmary only eleven nurses (with five assistants employed in scouring) to attend upon an average of 210 to 230 patients. Patients requiring attendance at night were often entrusted to the care of two convalescents—induced to give their services by the allowance of an extra supper. Sometimes it was necessary—from the want of nurses—to get friends of the patients to remain with them during the night. To put two patients into one bed was not unknown!

Matters had not greatly altered or improved by 1862—the year in which the Nurses belonging to the Infirmary were given over to the Nurses' Training School—but the number had increased to 20, with the five helps as before. The then salaries varied from nine pounds to sixteen guineas per annum. One extra special surgical nurse received £25, which was obviously too much for her as she left in a few months for "want of steadiness." The Physician before alluded to, says that the nurses of his day (1849—50) were a "very scratch lot," and the "want of steadiness" was apparently contagious, for it accounted for the dismissal of a good many. These were the days of the "Sairey Gamp" type of nurse and Florence Nightingale's assertion "that nursing was a work for gentlewomen fell like a bomb upon the people of England."

From the nurses of the past to those of the present, what an advance! Yet they are being trained to still greater efficiency. We have our Nursing Staff; and they are worthy of the best we can do for their comfort, health and happiness. I am sure all will agree that we have a splendid case to present to the public in our appeal for the necessary funds for the building of the New Nurses' Home.

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