

NURSING ECHOES.

The illness of His Majesty the King, who has been off duty suffering from severe influenza and bronchitis, aroused great anxiety throughout the country—and his recovery a lively sense of relief—and everyone will wish him a happy holiday during convalescence in the sunny South, and complete restoration to health. We are so used to our King always being on the spot—never failing to keep his engagements, thus setting a patriotic example in his love of home and devotion to duty—that his absence is all the more deplored. In the care, however, of eminent physicians and trained nurses everything is well. We know from the daily bulletins the names of his medical advisers, and now that Trained Nursing has been constituted a Profession—why should we not be informed who are the members of our Profession entrusted with the honour and responsibility of carrying out medical directions in the sick room of our King? We just throw out the suggestion—as apparently so few people yet realise the professional status of the Registered Nurse—and nothing inspires high standards of responsibility more effectually than a little public recognition and appreciation.

The announcement that Her Royal Highness Princess Mary Viscountess Lascelles will open the new Headquarters of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales at 20, Portland Place, London, W., on April 4th, will be pleasing to Registered Nurses. The State Registration of Nurses after a standard professional training—provided for in the Nurses' Registration Acts—is one of the most beneficent reforms of recent times, calculated to help prevent and cure disease, and thus to raise the standard of National health, and we are specially gratified to find the King and Queen have realised its importance by permitting Princess Mary to associate herself with it.

To help the funds of the Queen Victoria's Jubilee Institute for Nurses Lady Curzon of Kedleston is again arranging a ball this season, which will take place on Thursday, May 21st, at Lansdowne House.

The League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses have sent a subscription of £5 5s. to the St. Paul's Restoration Fund. The Nursing Staff in the Hospital have also contributed a like sum.

We are glad to know that the Minister of Health, in reply to a question in the House of Commons, has announced his intention of publishing at an early date draft regulations designed to give effect to the majority of the recommendations of the Departmental Committee on the use of preservatives and colouring matter in food.

Trained nurses may help much in two ways in relation to the food of both sick and well. First, by taking pains to acquaint themselves with the important question of "what foods feed us," and as far as possible with the quality and purity of the food which they administer to

patients; and, secondly, by realising that it is not primarily what a person takes but what he digests which nourishes him; and that, therefore, an important part of their duty is to present nutritious and easily assimilated food in an attractive form to the sick, and to help the well to keep well and to build up their own constitutions, and those of children and others depending on them, by providing well cooked and nourishing food selected and prepared with regard to its nutritive value.

Registered Nurses will learn, with great regret, that Major R. W. Barnett has been seriously ill with influenza, and unable to attend to his Parliamentary duties. He is now, we hope, on the way to convalescence, and there are many nurses who will wish him a complete and quick recovery.

The effect of the policy of the General Nursing Council for England and Wales in giving the monopoly of supplying the hats of State Registered Nurses to one firm, is that everywhere the storm cap is seen worn with the coat, or coat and skirt, and, further, it is now displayed in shop windows in this combination, as if it were the ordinary regulation uniform. As the hat may not be supplied by the dress houses which supply the uniform, and the storm cap may, it is natural that such houses should push the cap, and as nurses are busy women and prefer to buy all the State uniform at the same establishment, and dislike buying hats which they have not seen, by post, and as the price of the storm cap is attractive, they too often purchase that only. The result is that the most unsuitable and unbecoming combination of coat and storm cap is frequently seen in the London streets. Clearly, sooner or later, we hope sooner, something will have to be done, and either the monopoly of permission to sell the hats withdrawn, or the storm cap abolished.

In giving evidence before the Royal Commission on Lunacy and Mental Disorders this week at Old Palace Yard, Westminster, Mr. George Gibson, General Secretary of the National Asylum Workers' Union, spoke of the conditions of employment of mental attendants, and expressed the view that such attendants would not be attracted to the service until reasonable remuneration and better prospects were offered. As a rule female staffs were more unsettled than the male, few Matrons were, he said, really satisfactory, and there was little system in the working of women staffs. He opposed, as did Miss Maud Wiese, who is a Member of the Council of the Union, the employment of women nurses in the male wards, and said that fully 50 per cent. of Medical Superintendents were opposed to it. We are aware that there is a sharp division of opinion on this question, but we know of no institution where a Sister has been put in charge of a Male Mental Ward where the authorities would revert to the old system of an entirely male staff.

Dr. Montagu Lomax expressed the view that the medical superintendent of a mental hospital should be relieved of all administrative duties. In many instances the whole attitude towards the medical superintendent was that he was there to keep expenses down.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)