

NURSING ECHOES.

We are glad to learn that the National Memorial to Queen Alexandra is meeting with widespread support.

Princess Mary Viscountess Lascelles, and Viscount Lascelles have sent £100 to the fund.

Steps are being taken to give the whole of the Nursing Profession an opportunity of making a joint contribution to the fund, and we hear Dame Maud MacCarthy, R.R.C., has the matter in hand.

Practically every county now has its organisation for collecting. In most counties the Lord Lieutenant is heading the appeal, and in many of the county boroughs the appeal is being issued in the name of the Mayor. Numerous other bodies are being approached with a view to their helping to make the memorial worthy not only of the late Queen Mother, but of the work which was so dear to her heart. One of the latest bodies to be approached is the Royal Horticultural Society, which has sent a donation of 100 guineas, and an appeal to all its affiliated societies.

Queen Alexandra was a great lover of flowers, so no doubt the section of the people who love gardens, and they are of all classes, will gladly send subscriptions.

The Nursing Staff at Middlesex Hospital is continuing its good work in support of the Reconstruction Fund, which now amounts to £287,748 7s. 3d.

The Nursing Staff Fund, previously acknowledged, amounted to £1,343 12s. 8d., and the following subscriptions are now announced:—£206 1s., Mrs. Kieffer (proceeds of a sale of work held at Puerto Barrios, Guatemala, Central America); £30, Miss Morgan, R.R.C.; £10 10s., Mrs. Ernest Schiff; £6 11s., Miss Giddings; £2 15s. 3d., Miss Marjory Cowley (collection); £2 2s., Proceeds of a rug made by patients of Prince Alice Ward (second instalment); £2, Nurse Sharp, Miss E. C. Wilkinson; £1 12s. 6d., Nurse Cornford; £1 1s., Miss K. Lander; £1, Anonymous; 10s., Mrs. Cozens Hardy, Mrs. Hurst.

For the new Nurses' Home at the Manchester Royal Infirmary, £150,000 are required, and at the close of the year £45,650 had been received. To diminish the present working hours of nurses—which are 63 per week for the day staff and 73 for the night staff—to 56 hours, it will be necessary to increase the staff by 157 nurses and domestic servants. The present staff comprises 220 nurses and 113 maidservants. It is intended to make provision in the new home for a total additional staff of 379—266 nurses and 113 maids.

In these days, without a full complement of nurses and domestic workers it is impossible to carry on our hospitals with a chance of success, and to judge from the proposed increase of the staff, the strain must have been severe in the past.

The Poor Law Officers' Journal recently drew attention in no measured terms "to what niggling detail" the Metropolitan Asylums Board can at times descend. It states:—

"Some nurses on the Staff of the M.A.B. have recently been treated at the Royal Northern Hospital at a total

cost of about £45. Of this sum the Nurses themselves have contributed a small proportion, but it is not clear what degree of compulsion, if any, is brought to bear upon them to make this contribution. In view of the possibility that the very nature of these Nurses' employment has put them in a position in which some risk may be run, it seems entirely unnecessary that they themselves should be called upon to bear any part of the cost of the necessary treatment. Had the Board borne the whole cost, there would have been general agreement that it was doing no more than it was morally bound to do. But not merely does the Board not bear the full cost; it does not even bear the whole of the cost after the Nurses' own contributions have been paid. The amount in question was about £40 ("deducting the amounts contributed by the employees themselves"), and the Board has decided, subject to the assent of the Ministry of Health, to give a donation of £10 10s. to the funds of the Royal Northern Hospital. In other words it is the Royal Northern Hospital that is having to bear the lion's share of these particular expenses. So far as the Nurses are concerned, they have been forced by the Board into the position of being recipients of charity. The Board clearly should have refrained from interfering unless they were prepared to do everything.

"Another similar instance may be recounted. The Board's Otologist was called in by the Medical Superintendent at the Western Hospital in connection with the cases of two nurses supposed to be suffering from mastoid disease. The Otologist operated on one of these at his own consulting rooms, his fees for these cases being ten guineas. The Board accepted the statement of the Medical Superintendent that the Otologist had treated Nurses at the Western Hospital on previous occasions without fee, although this work is outside the scope of the duties for which he is remunerated by the Board. The salaries of the two Nurses in question were respectively £60 with emoluments and £65. It was the latter Nurse who was operated upon, and she offered a contribution of two guineas towards the cost; the other offered one guinea. The Board held the view that both Nurses should pay two guineas, and recommended that the Ministry of Health be requested to sanction the payment by the Board of the balance of six guineas. Here, then, we have great public parade of the saving of a few pounds by this Board whose custom it is to deal with its budget estimates in committee of the whole Board, the result being that not a whisper of any of the old discussions reaches the press and the ratepayers. One often hears of 'straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel.' Here we see the operation in actual performance."

A report made by Dr. E. L. White, Medical Superintendent at the Shirley Warren Infirmary, Southampton, on the health of the nursing staff, reveals very serious conditions. Eight nurses have contracted pulmonary tuberculosis during the last three and a half years, four of whom have died. The number of those warded in the sick room has risen from 21 in the last six months of 1922 to 54 in the corresponding half of 1925. Further, the illnesses are more serious and last longer than formerly, and there has been a steadily increasing amount of disability not needing sick room treatment.

Dr. White is of opinion that the sickness has been directly due to the hours of duty among heavy cases in overcrowded wards, and gives the number of patients as 495, and of the total nursing staff, excluding the Matron and her Assistant as 64. The ratio of nurses to patients during the day is one to ten, and at night one to thirty-four. The ratio of Sisters to patients is one to fifty-three during the day, and one to two hundred and

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)