

NURSING ECHOES.

The Queen, attended by the Dowager Countess of Minto, recently visited Princess Christian's District Nursing and Maternity Home, Windsor, an institution which must always have a special interest for members of the Royal British Nurses' Association, as an institution in which Princess Christian, their first President, was so keenly concerned.

Her Royal Highness, Princess Mary, Countess of Harewood, has graciously consented to be present at an At-Home to be given by the Matron-in-Chief, and members of Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service, at Grosvenor House, Park Lane, on Wednesday, July 9th.

Just now the general Press is espousing—invited or uninvited—the cause of the badly treated probationer, and, as a corollary is attacking the Matrons, accusing them of hardness, and other unlovely qualities in wholesale fashion. This shows a lack of proportion which is surprising in responsible papers. Because a Pressman (or woman) has come across an individual case of oppression by a Matron it is illogical to argue that all Matrons are planned on the same pattern. A wise doctor was wont to assert that "there are as many individualities of stomachs as of faces," and, certainly, there is as great a variety of Matrons. Some there may be who may with justice be condemned in this respect, but we believe the majority of nurses would testify that their conception of womanhood has been raised to a higher level through contact with the Matron of their training school, who by precept and practice has interpreted to them the meaning and duty of life, and who represents to them their ideal woman.

It is to be hoped that Miss Meyboom's example of chaperoning a group of Dutch nurses to see the sights of London, and the beauties around, will be followed by other enterprising leaders from various countries—as for enlightening the mind and cementing international good feeling, nothing can be more helpful.

We owe it largely to the organising ability of Miss Isabel Macdonald and her enthusiastic helpers at the R.B.N.A. Headquarters, that this experiment has been such a splendid success, and to find space for a full report of the visit, her article takes the place this month of the monthly R.B.N.A. Supplement.

May is pre-eminently the month for Annual Meetings in connection with Nursing. On Wednesday, May 7th, Her Royal Highness the Princess Arthur of Connaught, R.R.C., S.R.N., President of the Trained Nurses Annuity Fund, is presiding over its Annual Meeting at 194, Queen's Gate, when a satisfactory report of the year's work will be presented.

Both the subscriptions and donations show an increase on those of the previous year. The amount received for subscriptions was £44 16s. 10d. more than in 1928, while the increase in donations was £124 1s. This last item is particularly satisfactory as the considerable increase in the sum received for donations in the previous year was due to one large gift regarding

which some detailed information was given in the Report. The General Expenses have been £75 13s. 4d. more than in 1928, but the increase in the income indicates that this expenditure was justified. The investments have been increased by £1,000.

The number of Nurses receiving annuities last year was sixty-nine. The Council have received most grateful acknowledgments of the help thus assured to them; without such help many of them would have found life, with (in most cases) the complications arising from ill-health, very difficult indeed. In their name the Princess most warmly thanks all those who subscribe so very generously to the Fund.

The twenty-seventh anniversary of the Nurses' Missionary League will be held on Thursday, May 8th, at University Hall, Gordon Square, W.C. There will be a Morning and an Evening Session and in the afternoon a *Conversazione* when the hostesses will be Mrs. Sturge, Miss Hett, Miss Milne (St. Mary's Hospital), and Miss Van Sommer. Amongst the speakers will be Miss M. E. Sparshott, C.B.E., R.R.C. (late Lady Superintendent of the Royal Infirmary, Manchester) and Miss Hope-Bell, F.B.C.N., of Shanghai, a prominent member of the Nurses' Association of China in which for many years she held the position of Hon. Secretary.

A member of the League writing in its official organ, *Nurses Near and Far*, gives a description of some of the conditions which prevail in the East, more especially amongst the women:—

"In India where poverty is most bitter the average income is £2 a year; and the woman of the family is only too thankful to get *any* kind of work, anywhere, whether it is suited to her frail body or not. She must either take it or starve; she has no option. The smooth, firm roads over which cars race along as quickly as on any Western boulevard are the admiration of many travellers to India. But how were they constructed? Who helped to make them or did most of the 'donkey' work? The earth and concrete were carried in baskets on the heads of Indian women. Where buildings are being constructed, the Indian women are patiently bearing the earth from the excavations, carrying the bricks, fetching the water and helping to mix the mortar. Only once in a long time can they slip away to give hasty attention to the needs of the tiny brown baby, who in his little basket has been stowed away in some corner. In the country districts these coolie women work for the farmers, helping to plant the rice and weeding the crops. And all the wages they receive for hauling bricks all day in the blistering heat of the most unbearably hot cities on the face of the globe, or for bending double over the little rice plants hour after hour in the unshaded fields of the tropics is 1½d. or possibly 2d. a day—a little more than half the wage of a man."

The Annual Dinner of the Guy's Hospital Nurses League, always a very pleasant function, will be held this year in the Nurses' Home on Friday, May 9th. Dinner will be served at 7 o'clock, and the Annual Meeting will take place at 8 p.m.

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