

NURSING ECHOES.

As soon as the holidays are over a meeting will be held to consider the organisation, financial and otherwise, of the National Committee of the Florence Nightingale Foundation, and we are looking forward to great interest being aroused in the proposed Memorial.

A cheque for £10 10s. has already been sent to the President of the National Council of Nurses by the Sister Tutors Group of the College of Nursing—the first donation received, which will be handed over to the National Committee as soon as its scheme of finance is organised. We congratulate this Group in taking the initiative, as it proves their appreciation of the value of post-graduate nursing education in association with the honoured name of Miss Nightingale.

We suggest that, in establishing scholarships for the Post-Graduate Nursing Course, each country shall associate the names of national Nurse Pioneers with their benefactions, in gratitude for their devotion to duty. Every country holds such women in honour, and by this means a succession of students will learn of luminous examples worthy of emulation.

The Editor has received several enquiries concerning the Nightingale Fund to the subscribers of which the beautiful picture reproduced in our last issue was dedicated. In reply we venture to quote from the issue of the *Daily Telegraph* of January 20th, 1932.

"Memory of Florence Nightingale. How Our Nursing System was started.

"The Florence Nightingale Fund has reached nearly £40,000."

This item, which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* under the heading "75 Years Ago," takes the mind back to the real consummation of all the schemes and the untiring endeavours of the "Lady with the Lamp." This fund and the nurses' training school of St. Thomas's Hospital form the foundation of the nursing system as we know it to-day.

In the summer of 1855, when the country rang with the praise of Florence Nightingale's work in the Crimea, Sidney Herbert, the War Minister, was asked what form of testimonial would be most acceptable to the lady whom England delighted to honour. The reply was that "the one wish of her heart has long been to found a hospital in London and to work it on her own system of unpaid nursing."

Thus the fund was started. By 1860 about £50,000 had been collected, and the Nightingale Fund Training School at St. Thomas's Hospital came into existence. The first of the great training schools for nurses, it is the alma mater of English nursing.

At the meeting in Willis's Rooms which inaugurated the fund in November, 1855, Sidney Herbert read, as part of his speech, the soldier's letter which told how the wounded in the Crimea "could kiss her shadow as it fell, and lay our heads on the pillow again content." The speech inspired a popular poem of Longfellow's which has made the story of the "Lady with the Lamp" world famous.

The fund and the ideas it stood for were not immune from opposition. A book of contemporary memoirs

expresses amusingly Lady Palmerston's views on the subject:

"Lady Pam thinks the Nightingale Fund great humbug. The nurses are very good now: perhaps they do drink a little, but so do ladies' monthly nurses, and nothing can be better than them; poor people! it must be so tiresome sitting up all night, and if they do drink a little too much they can be turned away and others got."

In "Letters of Charles Dickens to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts," edited by Charles C. Osborne, we learn that Dickens wrote over six hundred letters to the great Coutts heiress, and it is something to learn that the prototype of Mrs. Gamp was a nurse employed for a time by the Baroness during the illness of her friend Mrs. Brown, at 1, Stratton Street, Piccadilly. Here is Dickens, in 1846, writing to Miss Burdett-Coutts, as she then was, "I do not wish Mrs. Brown would be ill again, but I wish she would do something which would lead to her suggesting another character to me as serviceable as Mrs. Gamp!" Then we are given certain views, hardly novel, of Dickens as practical philanthropist. Thus we have his detailed suggestions for the running of his friend's Home for fallen women, with the remark that its inmates "are to be *Tempted* to virtue." But Dickens, for all that the piety of Dickensians may assert to the contrary, was very much more of a benefactor when he was operating as a novelist than when he was directly attacking the evils of his time.

A very interesting evening was held on August 25th at the Municipal Baths, Tottenham Green, when the University College Hospital wrested from Middlesex the very hotly contested hospital team race trophy of the Park Swimming Club's Grand Charity Gala, in aid of the Prince of Wales' General Hospital, Tottenham. The hospitals that competed were the University College Hospital, Middlesex, Royal Northern, King's College, London, Guy's, Charing Cross, Royal Free, St. George's, Metropolitan and St. Bartholomew's. The Middlesex Hospital was first and University College second in the first heat, and in the second Guy's came first with the London second, and in the final between Middlesex (the holders of the Vase) and University College it was thrilling. Competitors swam evenly until the last moment when University College won by a hand's length. Prince of Wales' General Hospital were not represented, but Miss Bickerton (Matron) said they hoped for better luck next year. It was the Prince of Wales' General Hospital which subscribed for the "Holmes Vase" in memory of one of their number who in her lifetime was a great swimmer and very keenly interested in inter-hospital competition.

At the conclusion of this interesting evening, the trophies were presented to the winners by Sir Albert Barratt, Vice-Chairman of the hospital.

The Queen's Nurses' Magazine has issued with the September issue a really lifelike portrait of Miss A. M. Peterkin, which has been specially taken for the magazine. We are informed that it will be possible to purchase sepia copies at 3s. 9d. each if twelve or more

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