

## NURSING ECHOES.

H.R.H. the Duchess of York paid a visit to the United Nursing Services Club, 34, Cavendish Square, on Tuesday, March 8th. She was received by Dame Ethel Becher, G.B.E., R.R.C., Dame Anne Beadsmore Smith, D.B.E., R.R.C., and Miss M. F. Steele, R.R.C., Secretary. Later the Directors and the Members of the House and Finance Committees were presented to Her Royal Highness, also Miss Mabel Thurstan, C.B.E., R.R.C., who was Matron-in-Chief of the New Zealand Nursing Service during the War. Miss E. A. Dowse, R.R.C., presented to the Duchess a lovely old-fashioned bouquet of flowers. Dame Anne Beadsmore Smith told the Duchess something of Miss Dowse's work during the War. Her Royal Highness was very interested in this and asked Miss Dowse several questions about her experiences and work. Later the Duchess of York went round the Club, which she greatly admired, remarking how delightfully home-like it was, and especially she admired the dainty little bedrooms. The floral decorations were also commented on.

The reception was a very pleasant one as all such receptions are at this popular Club. There were delicious cakes, and Miss Steele is a hostess always alert to do everything that may add to the pleasure of invited guests.

The anniversary of Florence Nightingale's Birthday, May 12th, is to be annually celebrated as Red Cross Day, when funds will be collected in London and elsewhere. Last year £11,745 was collected, and branches are urged by the Executive Committee to assist in a nation-wide appeal this year.

At a recent meeting of the Council of the Queen's Institute of District Nursing, held at 58, Victoria Street, S.W., when Sir Harold Boulton presided, it was reported that the Queen had appointed the new council of the Institute for the three years 1932-35, and had reappointed Lord Shaftesbury as vice-president.

The Earl of Athlone and Sir Harold Boulton were reappointed joint chairmen of the council and Sir William Hale-White vice-chairman. Mr. A. E. D. Anderson, Colonel Francis W. Pixley, and Mr. A. J. Hugh Smith were reappointed honorary treasurers, and Lady Georgina Mure, Mrs. Bruce Drummond, Mrs. John Whitaker, Lord Aberdare, and Mr. D. F. Pennant, honorary secretaries of the Institute. The sub-committees for 1932 were also appointed.

The General Purposes Sub-Committee reported that it was taking steps to recommend to the Council a successor to Miss Peterkin, the general superintendent, who, to the great regret of every one, was resigning in July, after nearly 40 years' service for the institute.

Miss Mary Couch, the blind octogenarian nurse who boasts a link with Florence Nightingale, is lying seriously ill at Brighton in the National Institute's Home for Blind Women.

Born in 1847, one of her early memories is that of the stories of suffering endured by British wounded during the Crimean War. Moved by the heart-rending accounts which reached England at that time, Miss Couch and

her four sisters all determined to devote their lives to the relief of the sick and injured.

She herself became a nurse at the Liverpool "Royal," where her superintendent was Miss Mary Merryweather, who had herself been trained by Florence Nightingale. In the South African War, one of Miss Couch's sisters served as nurse through the siege of Kimberley.

Quite recently Miss Couch was describing to a visitor at the Home her experiences as a nurse in the 'sixties, when, she said, there was "no larking" for probationers. "Beginners had to work in those days, and work hard. There was no smoking, and no theatre-going."

"Girls who take up nursing now seem to play at it. When I began, we were not supposed during our first year to see a street-lamp alight. We had two hours off in the twenty-four, but we were obliged to be in before dark."

Evening duty ended with a meal at 12.15 a.m., but the girls were not allowed to get into bed till the clock struck 2. If one of them "turned in" before that time and was discovered, she had to "turn out" again and wait for the hour to strike.

"They were very strict in those days," Miss Couch remarked, "and yet we were a happy family."

The death of a young artist who had been suffering for five years from pulmonary tuberculosis, to whose assistance a doctor was not called until within an hour or so of her death and who, up to February, had been in a "Christian Science Nursing Home" at Harrow, draws attention to the preferential position which these so-called Nursing Homes are granted by law.

When the Nursing Homes Registration Bill was under discussion in the House of Commons great exception was taken to the inclusion of Christian Science Nursing Homes under the Act, which provided that a fully trained nurse (the interpretation of which was a Registered Nurse) should be in charge of the Nursing in ordinary Nursing Homes. In the case of Christian Science Homes this was not required, but very great influence was brought to bear on their inclusion in the Bill, and Sir Kingsley Wood, in the discussion in the House of Commons on this point, undertook to consider their description as Christian Science Homes. When the Act was published, however, the marginal reference was to Christian Science Nursing Homes.

The result, therefore, is that while Nursing Homes, under the supervision of a Registered Nurse, are subject to public inspection and supervision, no such safeguard exists in the case of Christian Science Homes, which freely use the title of Nursing Home.

In the above case, that of Miss Judita L. A. B. Irwin, aged 20, Dr. Edwin Smith, the West London Coroner, told the jury that the girl was brought up among Christian Scientists and a doctor was not called until an hour or so before her death. He could not possibly regard that as a natural death.

Miss Ellen Moore, Superintendent of a Christian Science Nursing Home at Harrow, said that she was not a registered nurse, and held no ordinary nursing diploma. She had nursed during the war, and for the past fifteen years had been doing Christian

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)