

NURSING ECHOES.

A very useful pamphlet containing lectures to Nurses has been published by the Queen's Institute of District Nursing and is intended for Superintendents and Queen's Nurses. Miss Mercy Wilmshurst, General Superintendent of the Institute, who contributes the preface, writes that "in the training of Candidates it is often found difficult to find suitable books to cover each subject that should be included in the course since so many branches of work are included. The contents of the lectures given to Candidates outlined in these pages do not profess to cover any but matters which concern the relationship of the nurse to the Queen's Institute as the parent body, and to the local Committee by which she will be directly employed. It is hoped that the more domestic details which are touched upon will be a guide as to her attitude towards her patients, her general deportment as a public servant, and will promote the comradeship which exists in such a marked degree among Queen's Nurses whether working in England, Scotland, Ireland or Wales.

"The lectures on the duties of the nurse in public health work have been written by Miss Wyatt, M.B.E., Superintendent of the East Sussex Nursing Federation and her Assistant, Miss A. Brown, and a very warm expression of thanks is accorded to them for the care and trouble taken in providing an outline of this side of Queen's Nurses' work for which requests have been made for a long time past."

The first lecture gives a brief outline of the history of district nursing in the course of which we read:—

"The Midwives Act made a great deal of difference in the midwifery work of caring for mothers and babies, as it made it illegal for any but bonafide or certified midwives to undertake midwifery. Consequently a great need for well-trained midwives arose . . . The new situation development was largely met by the County Nursing Associations whose work it is to train midwives for their own County, to which the midwives return to work for a specified time by agreement for the training they have been given. It was found that the provision of a midwife employed by a Nursing Association encouraged people to come to her for advice on general illness and so some training in simple nursing care was given to her in order that she might be able, under the guidance of a Superintendent, to help to some extent, in this way, in rural, sparsely populated areas.

"What the future holds it is difficult to say, the Queen's Nurse is the ideal at which we aim and with an increasing number of cars and grants from various sources, the Village Nurse Midwife may not be required in years to come."

Copies of these lectures may be obtained from the Queen's Institute, 57, Lower Belgrave Street, London, S.W.1, price 8d., and they are well worth studying.

It is sincerely to be regretted that during the passage of the new Midwives Act through Parliament, the principle of equal standards of nursing for rich and poor was not enforced, and the "Queen's Nurse" standard of efficiency made obligatory on all public or voluntary associations assuming the responsibility of nursing the sick poor.

The "Village Nurse Midwife" does not exist in law, and should by degrees be superseded by the "Registered Nurse Midwife."

The obstruction to this reform is based on economy: the former practitioner is cheaper than the fully trained and qualified woman. Only the most efficient nursing should be tolerated when financed by the State—and a Government that does not realise this responsibility will some day have a rude awakening.

Are the chronic sick poor upon your conscience? If not, they ought to be.

How these often senile old people are to be taken care of is an urgent question. Poor old bodies, no one wants them, segregated away from the acute sick; all they need is to be fed, kept clean and happy as far as possible.

Who is suitable and willing to offer this service to God?

Not young probationers in their teens, not apparently the highly trained Registered Nurse. The solution of this question is one the nursing profession and the philanthropist must solve together. At present there is very great difficulty in providing the service needed. Who is going to help procure it?

When we see the thousands of women of all ages so spic and span in Nurses' uniform, highly qualified for first aid to the injured on earth and in air, we wonder if there are not some women willing to enter the service of the chronic lonely old suffering human beings who are hidden away in the shadows, from all display—the type which in times past were gathered into the community of saints. This question of how to care for the chronic sick is one which might well receive attention and discussion at the International Congress of Nurses, when they meet next year to give and take expressions of experience on Nursing Problems.

In the meantime Miss Henrietta Hawkins, who has long personal service as a Guardian of the Poor, will offer us an expression of opinion on the subject in our next issue.

An organisation of Catholic Nurses has been founded, under the title of "The International Council of Catholic Associations of Nurses," of which Mlle. d'Airoles, of Paris, is International President, and Mrs. Glanville Vice-President for England.

The Association of Catholic Nurses is organising a Congress in London next July, a week before the meeting of the International Council of Nurses—so that it is probable that those who are eligible will attend both Conferences. The fundamental principle upon which the I.C.N. is founded is that it is strictly non-sectarian, so that trained Nurses of all creeds and nationalities are eligible for membership through their National Associations—and are warmly welcomed within its sphere of influence.

The "Religious" were well represented at the Congresses held at Montreal, Paris and Brussels; and London 1937 will no doubt be equally pleased to have them present and participate in its deliberations.

Seur Pierre's address on "Principles and Ideals in Education. Their Application to Nursing Education," delivered in Brussels, still stands out as one of the most notable pronouncements of the Congress.

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