

THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES.

MEETING OF COUNCIL.

As we go to press a Meeting of the Council is being held to deal with important business. The financial report will show that the Fellows and Members have done splendidly during the past year, and met the expenditure without fail, which has of course been strictly controlled owing to War expenditure, an example we could wish might be emulated so far as Government Departments are concerned.

We would advise members of the College, should they lose home and property through the demons of destruction or, more politely, "through enemy action," to report to the Secretary, at 19, Queen's Gate, London, S.W.7, at once, so that they may avail themselves of financial help from the Lord Mayor's Fund, and also to at once report their loss to the responsible local authority. This is not a question of accepting charity, but financial aid for loss and damage. In these hard times nurses suffer serious loss and strain in their small incomes, and have a right to compensation.

A *Fellow* writes: "Enclosed please find cheque for four guineas; my subscription for last year—in arrears and this year in advance, with apologies.

Yes, I try to expound my theories whenever I have an opportunity in support of our profession, but it is increasingly difficult; the day of the six weeks' trained nurse is at its height, I fear.

Last week I visited a patient in a military ward of a large hospital here, run under the Civil Defence. I was left standing to await the pleasure of a young, much adorned nurse, who stood gossiping in a loud voice. It gave me the opportunity to watch one of the gallant heroes of Dunkirk having an injured and splinted arm most unprofessionally 'dressed' by a girl of some 18 years, wearing rings, and no apparent signs of asepsis anywhere!

It's all too dreadful, it makes me long to be 'up and doing,' but what are a few older, fully trained women, against this increasing army of modern self-satisfied youth?

I am not so *very* old, but I can't remember behaving like these girls, or having their apparent outlook!

Can't anything be done?"

The *safety* of our wounded is the real issue on which to take a stand, but who will come forward and protest in the press? But as we advise elsewhere, a determined effort must be made to prevent further injury to professional standards.

A Lifetime of Beneficent Work.

We all know how many nurses give lifelong service for very little remuneration, and the following letter proves how necessary it is that the value of *skilled* nursing to the community should be realised. This is a matter which must receive serious consideration by Registered Nurses and the Government after the War, when it is to be hoped women's work will be justly estimated and remunerated, especially the branches of work in which they are specially skilled, and in which there can be no very serious competition with men.

Letter from a valued member: "I very much regret to tell you that I am quite unable to send my subscription.

"When the war started I was Matron of a Convalescent Home at ——— but the Government took over the Home, and it has not since been used as a Convalescent Home, therefore my services were no longer needed.

"I am now in my 69th year, so am unable to take up work elsewhere. Unfortunately I receive no pension from the Home, although I worked there for 19 years; the Committee are not in a position to give a pension. I am glad to say I have my own home, and a very small income which only brings in just under £1 a week, and to that I have added the State Pension of 10s., making in all £1 10s., so you will quite realise that I cannot possibly afford to continue my subscription, much to my regret.

"I wish the valuable work of the College every success, and only wish my income would allow of my support."

Alas! a lifetime of beneficent work, and very little gratitude from the richest nation in the world, and whose Ministry of Health has just sanctioned Loans to Local Authorities of £2,557,683 for the quarter ended 31st December, 1940, many of whose officials receive large salaries of from £1,000 to £2,000 annually which carry a handsome pension.

How Educative is Travel.

The following interesting letter has been received from a Fellow. How educative is travel.

She writes: I left Hong Kong September 20th and arrived Liverpool December 3rd, 1940. Seventy-four days—a long but very interesting voyage.

People in the Colonies are asked not to return home for "our leaves," but to visit some other part of the Empire.

I, however, asked to come home, as I felt I wanted to know what things were really like.

After we left Colombo we sailed for Durban, then Cape Town. At these ports we were allowed ashore. I remember my visits there with pleasure. Next we went to Lagos, in Nigeria, Takeradi on the Gold Coast, and on to Free Town in Sierra Leone, where we joined a convoy. At the three latter ports we were not allowed ashore; we only glimpsed the coastline from the ship. I travelled in the Blue Funnel Liner T.S.S. *Ascanious*, a passenger-cargo boat. It was most interesting at the ports watching the loading of cargo. I have never taken so much interest in cargo before!!! We were the flagship of the convoy; therefore the centre of activity with the Admiral and his "entourage" on board. We had a wonderfully calm voyage on the whole; only about six "off" days out of 74. We brought passengers from Malaya and Ceylon who were spending their "leaves" in S. Africa. Then we brought passengers returning from leave in S. Africa to their stations on the West Coast and deposited them at Lagos, Takeradi and Free Town.

We were 17 adults and two children to arrive in England. Travelling in convoy is slow work, but it is a fine sight, and entering the Mersey two abreast (and they said we were four miles in length)—I just felt thrilled. The night of December 2nd, you remember, was a bad night for Liverpool, and out at sea we saw and heard bombs dropping. A great welcome!!! During the last four years we have had an apprehensive time in Hong Kong, and I have seen much suffering bravely borne; but since I have been home I have been very much impressed by the matter-of-fact cheerfulness, the courage and resourcefulness of ordinary citizens. When I read in the "papers" and heard over the wireless how the folks were standing up to things, I did not think they could possibly stand up to bombs, but now I have seen for myself. It is good to be in England at this time.

I have to return to Hong Kong in time for duty June 28th, 1941.

I hope you are well. The December BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING was given to me by my friend, Nurse Knowles.

I was sorry to read of the demolition of 39, Portland Place.

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