

NURSING ECHOES.

How is it that any great thing is accomplished? By love of justice, by constant devotion to a great cause, and by an unflinching faith that what is right will in the end succeed.—*John Bright.*

There is evidently a great deal of unrest in the Nursing World, which appears to us inevitable owing to the fact that there are not enough trained nurses to staff the hospitals required for the sick, wounded and convalescent men of the defence forces. This shortage, which should never have been allowed to arise, might have been prevented if the Ministry of Health had not obstinately refused the right of the National Council of Nurses to help in a system of organisation three years ago, and adopted methods promoted by amateurs and politicians, which is daily becoming more costly to the unfortunate taxpayer. The latest absurdity proposed is, we believe, that women who go into hospitals for a fortnight's experience of nursing shall be termed "Student Nurses" instead of "Nursing Auxiliaries." A very mischievous suggestion from whomever it emanated.

The genuine student nurses attached to the Schools of Nursing, under a three years' contract of instruction and service, are naturally indignant at this latest proposed indignity. We hope they will make their indignation heard and nip such folly in the bud.

This should be done through their matrons to which their schools are attached, and, failing them, let them go direct to the Committee and place reasoned arguments against any such suggestions which reduces their contracts to futility. The day has gone by when Student Nurses, the invaluable life's blood in the stream of a Nursing School, can be treated with contempt. The Student Nurses have their Association, let it meet and act.

Speaking editorially *The Times* states, under the heading, "Health and Rations" :—

"Lord Woolton's caustic remark on the subject of food and indigestion have a solid basis in the experience of every physician. Before the war digestive ailments were increasing at a time when most other ailments were tending to diminish; in consequence there was an increase in the number of cases of nervous depression, for the relationship discerned by the Greeks between disorders of the bile and disorders of the mind is substantial and permanent. Dyspepsia is indeed the mother of despair and indigestion the enemy of moral. This was shown quite clearly during the Four Years' War; as rationing increased, in that war, the general health improved and both nervous diseases and diabetes—among other organic complaints—fell away. It was suggested that these changes for the better were due to the new interests which had been infused into many lives, and the phrase 'too busy to think about falling sick' was frequently heard. In fact, however, the suspension of heavy eating in favour of frugality with plenty of bodily exercise was the real agent of benefit."

All the same it must not be forgotten that thousands of our people have been underfed, and every care must be

taken, that as far as possible, more, and not less, food shall be secured for them.

Highly-paid politicians can take very good care of themselves; but we nurses come into actual touch with the poor and know their little secrets. Our advice to "Mother" is, risk indigestion, nervous depression and other ailments. They know all about "frugality with plenty of bodily exercise" without further experience.

Mr. Morrison, Home Secretary and Minister of Home Security, advises the public to be prepared for the use of poison gas by the Germans. The majority of masks are reposing in cupboards. They must be brought out, and shouldered once more.

The Yugoslav Legation in Queen's Gate, London, is next door to the Headquarters of the Royal British Nurses' Association, and the latter very patriotic group of Nurses were on the *qui vive* when, amidst much excitement, the national flag of Yugoslavia was flown at the Legation in honour of the new Government. Pictures in *The Times* show M. I. X. Soubbotitch, the Yugoslav Minister, waving his hat, his face all smiles, and Sister Beatrice Treasure, R.B.N.A., is also on the spot; she would be, that is her rôle in life.

An instructive correspondence has taken place between Trained Nurses and V.A.D.s in the *Daily Telegraph*. It is the old, old story, V.A.D.s expecting after a few months' experience to be considered capable of staff nurses' duties and, indeed, we gather from the following communication that this responsibility is theirs after a few months' work. Signing herself "Another Nurse," a correspondent states :—

"When we have gained a certain amount of knowledge we are put in a category called Grade 1, and our duty in the ward then is that of a staff nurse and we are ranked as second lieutenants.

"If a V.A.D. has a normal amount of intelligence and does not mind doing some scrubbing and cleaning, there is no reason at all why she cannot learn a great deal and become a competent nurse."

Dame Beryl Oliver, writing from the V.A.D. Department of the British Red Cross, states that :—

"V.A.D. nursing members posted to military hospitals are graded as privates for the first three months of their service, but after this, if recommended by their matron, they are granted the status of members of the Queen Alexandra Imperial Military Nursing Service.

"It is true that the V.A.D. members do not have their meals with the sisters. This is because the V.A.D. unit is usually a large one in a military hospital, and the members have their own comfortable mess presided over by a Commandant."

We leave Registered Members of the Nursing Profession to form their own opinions on these arrangements. We cannot blame these pushing V.A.D.s who are, according to Dame Beryl Oliver, granted the military rank of officers after a few weeks' ward service, and the honour of admission to Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service if they lose their heads and run amok.

The real sufferers are the patients, but somehow they seldom appear in the picture—rank, swank,

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