

THE BRITISH COLLEGE OF NURSES.

In spite of alarms and raids the British College of Nurses is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily, and the clerical staff with many risks are on duty. Many letters are received and answered from the Dominions and U.S.A. Our home members, like the devoted nurses they are, are all far too busy to pay many visits to Headquarters, but as a monthly copy of the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING is one of the assets covered by subscriptions, we are able to keep well in touch with members.

Miss Dorothy M. Dickinson writes: "I herewith enclose a cheque for £2 2s. in payment of my subscription for this year and next year." [This is indeed generous, considering the calls upon our nurses' incomes.]

"I welcome the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING more than ever now that I am unable to get to London. I am extremely busy trying to build up a Training School here and I am enjoying my work immensely, but at times I feel as a Londoner I would like to be in the thick of it; one feels a bit of a deserter out in the country when the papers report another raid on London. Not, of course, that we do not have 'visitors' at night; we certainly do, but not so intensive as in the big cities. With every good wish to you and the British College of Nurses—to which we are all so proud to belong—and which I am sure is carrying on as usual in these 'not too good times.'"

Those of our colleagues carrying on the thorough training of student nurses and supervising the care of the sick could not be engaged in more valuable work for the future well-being of our hospitals. After war has ceased, the disorganisation in nursing ranks will be appalling, and every qualified registered nurse will be worth her weight in gold.

Several Fellows have inquired how best to oppose a Register of semi-trained "Assistant Nurses" now being considered by the Royal College of Nursing, as advocated by the Inter-Departmental Committee on Nursing Services.

Our reply to all such inquiries is: "Keep your Member of Parliament well posted in the pros and cons of the question, and get him to understand that a State Register of semi-trained nurses means hauling down the flag of efficiency attained through the Nurses' Registration Act of 1919."

No Hara-Kiri.

We are glad to hear from a Scottish member: "We mean to have no Hara-Kiri in Scotland." It will be remembered that whilst the Athlone Committee in England advocated depreciation of standards, the Committee of Lord Alness stood by high standards of nursing efficiency in Scotland.

As soon as the policy and proposals of the Royal College of Nursing concerning the Roll of Assistant Nurses is made public, the British College of Nurses will take such action as justice in the protection of the nurse demands.

The Dominion Nurses have Us in Mind.

Miss Alice Torr writes from Toronto: "It has been an anxiety to meet all legitimate expenses since last July when living expenses and taxes jumped over 50 per cent. . . . We are, at least, living in safety and comfort compared to what you are all undergoing at home. It does not bear thinking about. What people are suffering over there is terrible, and it is also heart-breaking to see pictures of the ruins of the dear old places that we all loved. I do hope you will get this letter safely, so many have gone down. One can but trust the seas will be kept open. With sympathy and best wishes."

THE MENTAL AFTER-CARE ASSOCIATION.

The sixty-first annual meeting of the Mental After-Care Association was held at Burlington House, on March 25th, by the kind permission of the President and Council of the Royal Society.

The Mental After-Care Association was founded in 1879 by the late Rev. H. Hawkins (the father of Miss Henrietta Hawkins, so well known to her colleagues in the nursing world for her literary ability, and for the devoted voluntary service she has given in the office of the BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING for 20 years), because of his great concern for the unfortunate mental hospital patients, thrust out into the world again after the seclusion of an institution. The good work that has been accomplished from this inspiration can never be wholly estimated, but is one for which many of us have warm admiration and sympathy.

The meeting was conducted by the Chairman of the Council, Colonel Henry Yellowlees, O.B.E., who welcomed the new President of the Association, H.R.H. the Princess Arthur of Connaught. Upon the death of Viscount Wakefield of Hythe, President of the Association for so many years, Her Royal Highness was approached with a request that she should honour the Association by becoming its President, and this she consented to do.

The Chairman pointed out that the new President would not be content to be merely a figurehead, and that she had earned the letters S.R.N. and R.R.C. after her name.

Retirement of Miss E. D. Vickers.

The Association received the resignation of Miss Vickers for health reasons, with very real regret. She had held the post of Secretary with conspicuous ability and success for 25 years, during which period the number of patients had increased from 379 in 1915 to more than 11 times that number in 1939; while the staff of the London office has grown from three to 12, and the number of homes supervised by the Association from three to 20; this in addition to the great number of establishments where there are boarded-out-patients.

Activities.

It is satisfactory to note that all branches of the work are functioning in accordance with the requirements of those whom the Association serves. Slight alterations have occurred owing to war conditions, and, as was inevitable during the period of severe air raids in the autumn months, there was a diminution in the number of patients sent from Hospital for Convalescence and On Trial; but, on the other hand, more patients have been sent to the homes under Section 55 of the Lunacy Act, and it is likely that this side of the work will increase as pressure in hospital wards becomes more acute.

Ministry of Health.

Some time ago the Association was approached by the Ministry of Health to assist them with cases of distress found in air-raid shelters and rest centres. The Association has been able to help on several occasions, and are hoping to come into contact with these unfortunate people as time goes on.

Patients Dealt With.

The total number of patients dealt with throughout the year was 2,663, being 1,061 men and 1,602 women.

The work of boarded-out patients meets with ever-increasing popularity. Miss Jacottet, the Association's Boarding-out Officer, has been most successful in her selection of homes and matrons. The scheme runs with the minimum of friction, the patients being happy and contented in their small communities.

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