

## The General Nursing Council for England and Wales.

A MEETING OF THE General Nursing Council for England and Wales was held at the offices of the Council, 23, Portland Place, London, W., on Thursday, December 21st, 1950.

### Finance

On the recommendation of the Finance Committee, bills and claims submitted for payment were approved, and the sums of £6,200 for Cash Account, £500 for Postage, and £1,000 for Examiners' Claims were allowed.

It was reported that the Committee had further considered the question of the establishment of a Finance Committee under Section 8 of the Nurses Act, 1949.

### General Purposes.

It was agreed that estimates totalling £245 and £50 1s. 6d. be accepted for work required at 17, Portland Place, W.1.

It was reported that the following appointments to the Council's staff had been made:—

*Inspector of Training Schools*—Miss I. B. Hicks, S.R.N., R.M.N., in charge of "Follow-up" Research Bureau, Crichton Royal, Dumfries.

*Assistant Examinations Officer*—Miss B. M. J. Hurden, Examinations Assistant in the Examinations Directorate of the Civil Service Commission.

*Assistant Accountant*—Miss A. M. Foren, Principal Clerk in the Accounts Department of the General Nursing Council.

## The Ear Syringe.

Being Partly Fact and Partly Fiction.

By Gladys M. Hardy.

IT WAS AFTER THE FINISH of the second world war, when surgical equipment and instruments were difficult to obtain, that a rising young Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist badly needed a strong, metal aural syringe. Such syringes are used for the removal of wax from ears and it is essential for them to be of stout metal. New ones seemed to be out of the question, so he looked around for a second-hand one.

His search ended in a small surgical equipment shop, situated in a quiet street of North London, which sold both new and old surgical instruments. There he saw the very syringe, highly polished, shining like new and going for a song. He was delighted with his purchase and took it home with great satisfaction. The syringe was of good quality and it gave yeoman service for three long years.

Then, one late summer's evening, just in the middle of a tricky piece of treatment, the syringe broke down in his hands. The patient was a slightly deaf spinster lady, so she didn't hear the highly expressive language of the frustrated doctor, neither could she understand the look of extreme annoyance which spread over his tired features.

"I am sorry Miss Wallace, but I cannot syringe your ears for you tonight, my syringe has broken. I will come along tomorrow and do the job for you, if I may. Good-night."

"Good-night Doctor, and thank you. Do come tomorrow by all means."

Once back home and alone in his surgery, Doctor Elland commenced to dismantle the syringe. He was intrigued by a strange rattling sound going on inside the head of the barrel, and was mystified by the seemingly large extent of the damage to the syringe. He removed the piston and unscrewed the barrel, when lo! and behold! a perfect little treasure trove of gems fell out on to the table. To state that the doctor was astounded, was to put it mildly, for he literally gaped at the diamond ear-rings, an emerald brooch, a ruby drop pendant and ruby bracelet and a man's gold and diamond ring, the total value of which was about £2,000.

When the doctor's astonishment subsided, his curiosity was allowed full play and he took stock of the situation. He was by now a junior consultant, and money was plentiful, so he was in no way tempted to keep his "finds." On his first free day he revisited the little surgical equipment shop from which he had made his purchase three years earlier, and he questioned the salesman there.

Yes, the owner of the shop remembered the syringe perfectly well. It was sold to him along with aural specula, myringotomy knives, and other E.N.T. equipment by a Polish lady doctor who had emigrated to the United States. With this information, Dr. Elland approached Scotland Yard.

It was a relatively simple task to trace the emigrant doctor, and she was cautiously approached by the New York police and questioned as to whether she had ever missed any jewellery. She replied in the affirmative and furnished a long and comprehensive list of jewellery, which included wrist watches, pearl necklaces, etc., thus absolutely convincing the Police that the gems found in the aural syringe could NOT possibly be hers. Whose then, were they?

Once again, and very cautiously the Police contacted the Polish doctor. Did she remember selling any surgical instruments in London in 1946; could she remember the individual instruments, and from whom did she buy them? And this is the story she related.

"I remember quite well selling my case of aural specula, syringes and knives. I cannot tell you where they were bought because they were really not mine, but they came into my possession by accident, having been placed in my care by a German doctor whilst I was in a concentration camp near Berlin. I was an inmate of the women's section, and was compelled to treat the camp officials for any minor ailments of the ear.

"One day, to my surprise, a German doctor came to my camp surgery and asked me if I would treat his ears for removal of wax. He lent me his own syringe to use. He seemed nervous and distraught and confessed to me that the Germans had almost lost the war, and that the Allies would be in Berlin within the next few days. He asked me what I should do when I was liberated. I remarked casually that I would make for England and the United States. With much confusion he stated that he would like to do the same, and then, as if he had admitted too much, he hurriedly withdrew.

"I cleaned and boiled his syringe and packed it safely in his case amongst his other instruments, and offered them to him the next time I saw him. He begged me very earnestly to take care of them for him for a while, and not to part with them under any circumstances whatsoever. When I was set free I was to take them with me out of the camp as my own medical equipment. Once I was out of the camp, he would contact me and regain possession of his instruments. He said they represented his worldly fortune, should he attempt to leave Germany, which rather amused me, for although they were good instruments, they would not be worth much second-hand.

"I never saw the man again. Events turned out as he had predicted and within the week I was liberated. I carried the instruments out of the camp quite safely and waited about outside for many hours, but the doctor did not keep his appointment. I decided to start for England and to keep the case of instruments as my stock in trade.

"On arrival in England, and with the help of friends, I managed to raise sufficient money for my emigration to the States. I regretfully sold the whole case of syringes, specula and knives for £20. That is all I can tell you."

Quite obviously the lady did not know of the valuable little gems hidden inside the barrel of the syringe. Neither will we ever know the fate of the German doctor, who, in contemplating flight from his stricken native land, packed a little fortune in an aural syringe, sufficient to cover the costs of a journey to a new and better land, a journey he was probably destined never to undertake.

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