

Nursing Echoes.

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THE question of holidays and recreations for Nurses is, as every good Matron feels, a very important matter, not only from the point of view of the happiness of the individual, but from the bearing which recreations have on the health and working capacity of a Hospital staff. At present there is neither uniformity of plan nor uniformity

of idea as to the length or arrangements of holidays and "days off." In some Hospitals there is an occasional Saturday till Monday granted; in others "long days," in some more "half days" weekly or fortnightly are the rule. Hours off duty are generally planned by the Matron, and usually to the perfect satisfaction of the Nursing Staff.

Some little trouble has arisen at the Wigan Infirmary with regard to the annual leave and routine hours "off-duty." Miss Macintyre, who has been Matron for five years, has done her best during her tenure of office to secure to the Nurses as many comforts and privileges as possible. She has reformed their sleeping arrangements and provided refinement and comfort at their meals, and it is owing to her efforts that the Nurses have a beautiful sitting-room, and are about to have separate bedrooms.

One of her first acts after being appointed Matron was to change the meagre and useless "one hour off duty" daily to two hours—a most beneficial innovation. One hour off does not allow either of rest or recreation. Two hours affords both. Miss Macintyre recently presented a Report to the Board in which she suggested an extension of the annual leave which has hitherto been only fourteen days for the whole Nursing Staff; she considered that two weeks in the year was insufficient—a view in which we entirely concur—and proposed that all the Nurses of over a year's standing should be allowed three weeks, and the charge Nurses four weeks in the year. In

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addition she suggested that the weekly "half-day" should be abolished and instead, one whole day off given in every month. Miss Macintyre is of opinion that the whole day would be more easily arranged for, would please the Nurses best and would unsettle them less.

The Matron's report was favourably considered by the Nurses' Recreation and Holiday Committee, but, when brought before the Board for their sanction, an amendment was moved by Mr. Campbell and seconded by Mr. Benson, "That the consideration of the Report be adjourned for a month, and that the question of the abolition of the Nurses' weekly half-day holiday be made the subject for vote by ballot of the Nursing Staff."

Unfortunately this mischievous amendment was carried and thus official sanction is given to an act subversive of all the Matron's authority and destructive of discipline. While we maintain that every freedom should be given to the Nurses to have a voice in their privileges, and while we think it wise for a Matron to consult the popular vote in a question of recreations, we must condemn the action of a Board which institutes a ballot which might result in the Nurses practically passing a vote of censure on their own Matron! The Matron and the Committee no doubt knew that the alteration of the holiday was perfectly in harmony with the Nurses' wishes. But, even if the Nurses had objected to the change, it was most unconstitutional, to say the least of it, to appeal to the Nurses after the Matron had presented her report.

It would be almost safe to predict that the Nurses will show their disapproval of this slight to their Matron by refusing to vote in a ballot which should never have been suggested.

So far as routine, discipline and work is concerned, the working staff of a Hospital must be content to place themselves in the hands of the Matron and Committee. But in all the more social side of Hospital life undoubtedly the Nurses should be able to have a voice. In our public schools and universities the students are not allowed to prescribe what courses of Latin grammar or doses of mathematics they shall take. But they do, one and all, have a very decided voice in their sports and recreations. And it should be the same with the Nurses. Hospital life should be so far democratic that the Nurses should have an opportunity of expressing their views on "times-off," libraries, recreations, debating societies, &c., and if they were allowed a little more latitude in these

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