

Coming Events.

December 27th.—Meeting of the Registration Board, Royal British Nurses' Association, 17, Old Cavendish Street, at 5 p.m.

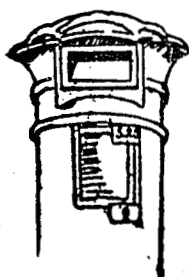
December 28th.—Sister Agnes "At Home" (by kind permission of the Matron), Shaftesbury Ward, Hospital for Women, Soho Square.

December 31st.—Christmas Tree Entertainment in Crawshay Ward, St. Mary's Hospital.

January 2nd.—Christmas Entertainment, Paddington Green Children's Hospital, 4 to 7 p.m.

January 2nd and 3rd.—Christmas Entertainment in the Banqueting Hall, St. Bartholomew's Hospital, 7 p.m.

January 3rd.—Christmas Tree Entertainment in the Hirsch Ward, St. Mary's Hospital.



Letters to the Editor.

Notes, Queries, &c.

Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not IN ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.

THE STANDARD OF AGE FOR NURSES.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I feel sure no Nurse could read the letter in last week's issue signed "Ida," without in the main being in sympathy with the writer, and without heart-felt sympathy for those Nurses—and I regret to say they are very numerous—who are finding themselves, soon after the age of 40, shelved to make room for a younger and fresher generation. But we Nurses must look this great economic problem in the face, and when we do so we shall find that Nurses as a class are only suffering from the same terribly keen competition for bread from which all other classes of women workers are suffering. The truth is that this country, and especially this Metropolis, is overstocked with women workers, and we must emigrate to new countries—by this I mean to countries newly opened up by civilisation—if we hope for the future to make a "living wage." Take the Nursing profession in London alone, and to compute that the Hospitals turn out 1,000 trained Nurses yearly (and that is below the mark), how is it possible that a demand can be created for such a supply? And when it is taken into consideration that there are hundreds of provincial Hospitals also manufacturing Nurses at the same rate, how is it possible that work can be found for all? The result is the inevitable survival of the fittest. The young, fresh, up-to-date Nurse steps out of the Training School full of energy and full of vigour, and is preferred before the senior and more experienced Nurse, for posts of all kinds—Sisterships, Matronships, private Nursing. It is useless to argue that she is less fit than the older Nurses for such duties—it may be true—but our Hospital authorities and our public want their pound of flesh, and they select youth, health and modern training, before the more substantial virtues of age and experience. I heartily endorse the opinion expressed by you in your footnote, that the only remedy is State Registration of Nurses. The system of Registration inaugurated by the Royal British Nurses' Association, has proved

to Nurses generally the power of co-operation. It has not been generally adopted, but it has stamped its *principle* of three years' training upon the leading Training Schools and forced Nurses who wish to join either of the two great Co-operations of private Nurses, to fulfil this standard, and in so doing it has accomplished a great pioneer work, which must prove ultimately of benefit to the sick of all classes, and to Nursing as a profession.

But there is a great field for Nurses, which so far has not been over popular, and therefore is not overstocked, and that is in the sick wards of our workhouses. It is to the ladies who have done so much to improve this branch of Nursing, to whom "Ida" appeals; it is pioneer work—desperately trying, desperately disheartening—needing the very highest attributes a woman can possess, and where youth and inexperience are quite out of place. May the readers of the RECORD hope for some advice from those ladies who have made this field of Nursing their special care.

Yours faithfully,
ALICE RICHARDSON.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

DEAR MADAM,—I am very pleased to observe in your correspondence column of last week that a lady, signing as "Ida," has brought before the public the very important question of the standard of age, *versus* the Physical and Mental fitness for a Nurse, which, at present, is one of burning interest to hundreds of Nurses. I speak feelingly, because I am some years above the age of forty, which, nowadays, seems to have been adopted as the limit of a Nurse's working life. How unreasonable this arbitrary rule is it is not difficult to prove, when one recognises the fact that many women to-day are in their prime from thirty-five to fifty. Look around at all the great women thinkers and workers of the day, and is it not true until they have had ten years' or more experience of life after leaving college, their opinions and thoughts are of little national value; so, with the trained Nurse, working in private houses—is it not much more seemly that she should have a wide experience of the world and human beings, and practical experience of Nursing, as well as theoretical knowledge? If our society grandmothers are physically fitted to hunt, waltz, and bicycle, and they do it, surely the working women are fitted to perform those more sedentary duties which the avocation of a Nurse requires. Personally, I am tougher, and capable of greater physical and mental strain than I was fifteen years ago. The hard-and-fast rule of age in Nursing is grievously *unjust*.

Yours faithfully,
ELIZABETH THOMPSON.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I am always of the opinion that professional subjects can often be viewed by one of the public in a larger, more unprejudiced way, than by a member of the profession itself. The public, although not acquainted with technical points, is apt to look at things from a practical commonsense standpoint. I know "the man in the street" and "the average person" frequently receive a large share of ridicule, but I am inclined to think them particularly sensible people. I am glad a correspondence has been started on the subject of the age for Nurses, and with your permission I will dwell on it from the point of view of an average woman who occasionally needs the services of a Nurse. Now, it would never occur to me to employ a Nurse *under* the age of forty. To me it seems most unsuitable for a married woman of forty years herself to be attended by a young Nurse straight from the Training Schools. The position of a Nurse is a position of trust, and to some extent she becomes more or less of a "confessor," that is to say, in her professional capacity she learns a great deal about our private affairs, illnesses and details, which it appears to me it is very unseemly and undignified for us to confide to quite a young woman. Of

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)