

"I can't think what's the matter with Mrs. 12, Sister," says a brisk nurse. "I should have thought it was a treat to her to rest in bed in a nice ward like this, and have everything done for her, especially as she is going on all right; but there she lies fretting. I can't make out what is the matter with her."

But Sister has a suspicion of the root of the trouble, and soon Mrs. 12 is pouring all her trouble into a sympathetic and comprehending ear. "It's just beautiful here, Sister," says Mrs. 12, "the ward, and the food, and the nurses, and all; if it wasn't for the children I should be as happy as never was. But I worries about them all day, and I can't sleep a wink at night for thinking what'll happen to them while I'm away, and it do seem so long to wait till Sunday visiting time to see my young man and hear how they be."

The upshot of the conversation is that Sister promises to speak to the doctor, and ask him to sanction the removal of Mrs. 12 at the earliest possible moment, and home she goes, joyful at the idea of lying in bed there, with the district nurse to come in once a day. She is very uncomfortable, no doubt, but she has the children round her. Probably she enforces rough discipline amongst them by means of a cane lying on the bed at her side, and the mother-love in her heart finds curious expression at times in the vigorous terms in which she harangues her offspring. But, after all, she maintains some sort of order as best she knows how, and the children are safe from the graver evils with which they are surrounded.

I am,

Dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

BEHIND THE SCENES.

NURSES AND THRIFT.

To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."

DEAR MADAM,—In correcting a clerical error which appeared in my letter of August 8th I did not imagine there could be any possible doubt as to the history of the foundation of the Royal National Pension Fund. As, however, your correspondent "Perplexed" may not have shared my keen interest in the formation of the Fund, I am glad to place at her disposal a few facts from personal knowledge.

Sir H. C. Burdett not only saw an urgent need in the lives of nurses for some provision for the future, but also arrived at a practical scheme by which that need could be widely met. To do so he had to deal with a very difficult problem, in which, however, the question of funds formed no part, as I believe the early expenses of investigation were undertaken without any appeal to the public.

In order to solve this problem trustworthy statistics were absolutely essential, and these appeared at first to be almost non-existent. The number of nurses, the amount of their earnings, and their power to contribute were all factors of the utmost importance. To obtain this knowledge forms of inquiry were widely distributed, and, in spite of inconceivable professional apathy and indifference, sufficient statistics were finally collected upon which it was possible to form an actuarial working basis.

How much energy and initiative were needed to carry the scheme so far it is difficult for anyone who has not had business training to realise, and the later work was no less easy. I agree with your correspondent

that "if thinking of a thing and wishing for it constitutes a founder," then very little work would be necessary; but much mental energy is required before a scheme commends itself to shrewd men of business, who, while they are among the most liberal of givers, are the least likely to be attracted by "castles in the air," and who require to have, first of all, a practical plan of campaign laid before them.

I am certain that the four generous donors of £5,000 each would be the first to acknowledge who the founder of the Pension Fund was, namely, the originator of the whole scheme, on whose shoulders the pioneer work rested. As I do not share your correspondent's "perplexity," I have no desire to enter into controversy on this question, which I must be pardoned for saying I think it would be a little invidious for nurses to discuss further when the facts are before them.

Yours faithfully,

J. WILSON.

Comments and Replies.

Provincial Matron.—We consider that 2s. a head per week, per nurse, and 1s. 6d. per maid is a reasonable sum to allow for the washing of the staff. In regard to the ward and domestic linen it is usual to have a contract. A shilling a dozen—taking large and small things together, blankets excepted—is probably the lowest sum you would get it done for satisfactorily. It is almost impossible to give an estimate as to the amount to be expended each week, as the requirements of patients vary so much with the nature of the cases.

Miss Evans.—We cannot advise you to enter any institution which does not give a course of three years' training in the wards. You would find yourself disqualified later for many desirable appointments if you decided upon a shorter term of training.

Monthly Nurse.—A spina bifida is a congenital malformation of the vertebral column, with the protrusion of some of its contents in the form of a fluid tumour. The sac of the tumour, formed of the dura mater and arachnoid membranes, may contain cerebro-spinal fluid only, or part of the cord, and nerves also, or, in the rarest form, the cord may be distended with fluid and attached to the wall of the sac. The important thing for a nurse to remember is that in placing the patient in bed there must be no pressure on the tumour, as this may cause death.

Notices.

STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSES.

The annual report of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses has been published, and can be obtained on application to the Hon. Secretary, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, price 1½d., post free, or 7d. for six copies. All nurses should obtain a copy of this report, and acquaint themselves with the history and progress of the Registration movement. Application forms for membership of the Society can be obtained from the same address.

OUR PRIZE PUZZLE.

Rules for competing for the Pictorial Puzzle Prize will be found on Advertisement page VIII.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)