

hope to cover personal expenses, to say nothing of saving for old age, and her claim that £30 should be a minimum salary for a Sister is a very moderate estimate. I should wish to see it £35—do not think it ought to be less. If Matrons wished, I think they could get committees to see that it was right that Sisters were not paid less than this sum. Sensible women could then keep themselves decently clothed, pay for a good holiday, and save a bit for a rainy day. Since I have been Matron of this hospital the Sisters have had a substantial addition to their salaries, all now beginning at £30 and rising to £35. We keep our good Sisters well at the latter sum, and they are the type of women who do not "run to evening frocks." A black skirt and pretty blouse answers our purpose.

COUNTRY HOSPITAL MATRON.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I think it a little unfair of Miss Mollett to assume because a hospital Sister wishes for a living wage that money is her chief object, and that a trained nurse must forego the happy life of a Ward Sister unless she is prepared to accept appreciation and social status in lieu of cash, and, moreover, that she must become a private nurse if she wishes to be justly paid. What is worth having is worth paying for, and surely from £30 to £40 a year is not an exorbitant salary for a woman who is expected to live up to a very high standard of work and conduct, and thus guide in the way they should go junior nurses of all kinds and classes. I do not deny that Sisters are greatly valued, if they are efficient, by doctors and Matrons, or that the social advantages are valuable; but these are no reasons why the salary should not be in some degree proportional to that paid to Matrons, medical officers, and clerical officials.

Yours sincerely,

A £38 SISTER.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I cannot agree with Miss Mollett's remarks on "Sisters' Salaries."

I think we shall most of us be of her opinion that there are many things in this world more important than money. As a rule, Sisters are the last to grudge the kind of work which cannot be "remunerated in bullion."

At the same time, the skilled labourer is worthy of her hire, and however exalted her sentiments as to contributing towards "maintenance of the patients," she ought to earn a salary that will enable her to save for her old age. Having been a Sister myself on £30 a year, I can state positively that it would have been impossible for me to join the Pension Fund unless I had had some help from home.

The calls on the £30 a year are many, without "evening frocks." Plants, flowers, and all the details that go to make the modern ward so bright, come mainly out of the Sister's pocket.

If a hospital is too poor to pay its Sisters good salaries it should advertise the fact, and I have no doubt volunteers would come forward to fill the vacant posts. But I think it should not be taken for granted that because a hospital is poor the salaries should be small, for that practically comes to sweating. The committee of such a hospital would not ask its cook to come for £10 or £15 on that account. For the good reason it knows it could not get her.

Because, for various reasons, there are many nurses always willing to accept ill-paid appointments, plenty of under-paid Sisterships are advertised and accepted, thereby forcing the charity of the workers towards the institution, whether they desire it or not.

I do not know of any other profession where it is taken for granted that the workers must be charitable, in the way it is in the nursing profession.

Personally, I should much grieve to see the day when work is only done for "bullion," but I do think every skillful, highly educated nurse should be able to provide for her old age.

I am, yours faithfully,

E. R.

DEAR MADAM,—I think it will be generally conceded that the Army and Navy Nursing Services afford the same conditions of service to Sisters as those which Miss Mollett considers should rank, if I may so express it, as part payment in kind. Social position, a post of authority and position, prestige, and congenial work are all the lot of these Sisters. Yet the Government, which does not pay fancy salaries, gives them a commencing salary of £37 10s., rising by £2 10s. annually to £50, and pensions. Thus an Army Sister receives a pension calculated on her rate of pay at the time of retirement, the rate being 30 per cent. after ten years' service, increasing 2 per cent. with each additional year's service up to a maximum of 70 per cent., while in cases of special devotion to duty a higher pension not exceeding £50 a year may be granted. Her civilian colleague, equally capable, and holding just as onerous a position, may consider herself fortunate if she receives a salary of £35 per annum; this is quite liberal as Sisters' posts go. Out of this she must, if she desires to make provision for the future, pay a considerable slice towards an annuity or a pension. Miss Mollett considers that Ward Sisters, by reason of the modest amount of their salaries, as truly contribute towards the maintenance of the patients within the walls as any £10 10s. subscriber.

If this is the excess of the value of a Sister's services over the salary paid her, would it not be better to make it over to her and let her deal with it as she thinks well? If she becomes a £10 10s. subscriber, she is more generous than most, for there are few of the most enthusiastic friends of hospitals whose annual subscription is a fourth of their whole income.

In my view it would be better to pay Sisters no salary at all, and appeal for such as could give their services on the ground of the poverty of the charity; some I am sure would be pleased to do so, for, as Miss Mollett says, our country has many daughters willing to accept heavy responsibilities for the sheer pleasure of the work, but for hospitals to pay, and Sisters to accept such a salary as your correspondent "E. S." speaks of, viz., £24 per annum, is wrong from the economic standpoint.

I am, dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

ECONOMIST.

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

DEAR MADAM,—As a Sister may I ask if we are never expected to accept an invitation in the evening, and, if we do, what are we to wear, as gentlewomen, if not an "evening frock"? Some people may say uniform, but there are various objections to this.

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