March 6, 1915

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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.

A SAFEGUARD TO THE PROFESSION.

To the Editor of The British Journal of Nursing.

DEAR MADAM,—As an Australian nurse, and a subscriber to your journal, I would like to express my gratitude to Mrs. Bedford Fenwick for her fine stand and interest on behalf of certificated nurses in England during the great crisis at the outbreak of war. Though I am far away I duly appreciate her action.

I should think most, if not all, certificated nurses among you will now be able to see what a great advantage and safeguard to their profession Registration will be.

The medical profession has not suffered in the way the nursing one has, as, being registered, only those legally qualified can act as a medical officer, either in England or the hospitals abroad, whilst it seems as if any woman, without practical experience, was considered capable to nurse the sick and wounded soldiers.

Here our Defence Department has been most loyal to the Royal Victorian Trained Nurses' Association, and every one of our Army Sisters who has gone with the hospital ships or the troops is a fully trained, and certificated nurse, and a member of our Association. The same applies to the Australasian Trained Nurses' Association and its branches in our other States.

I trust Mrs. Fenwick's efforts upon behalf of . Registration for Nurses will soon be crowned with success.

I am, faithfully yours, Melbourne. Gretta Lyons.

[In this connection it should be understood that all members of Q.A.I.M.N.S. and the Reserve are thoroughly trained nurses, also all those selected as members of the Territorial Force Nursing Service. Our strong objection is to the system whereby the War Office has delegated its responsibility to a voluntary society (the British Red Cross Society) for the standard of nursing to be maintained in auxiliary military hospitals which nurse sick and wounded soldiers. We claim, and shall continue to do so, that from the day a recruit enters the Army until the day he is retired the care of his health is the special duty of the Army Medical Service at the War Office, and that just as only qualified members of the medical profession are responsible for his medical treatment, so the application of all nursing treatment ordered should be in the hands of thoroughly trained, certificated nurses; moreover, that the wearing of nurses' uniform should be restricted to women so employed in military hospita's. At present cooks, kitchen-maids, hall porters, wardmaids, laundry maids, orderlies, and women employed in

other domestic avocations (quite honourable work, but not skilled nursing) are permitted to assume our uniform, encouraged directly by the present system in force recognised by the Army Medical Service. It is monstrously unjust. Of course, it is the inevitable result of the lack of legal status for the nursing profession through State Registration. Trained nurses are domestic servants according to the law of the land, and until they combine to gain just legal status and protection they will be professionally ignored even by Government Departments, such as the War Office, which would crumble into dust if the skilled services of trained nurses were not utilised in regular military hospitals "along with the lint and the bandages." We beg trained nurses to realise their present invidious position; perhaps its economic dis-advantages will bring it home to them. During their term of work in Brussels (practically as German prisoners) they received the salary of f a week; the young registered medical men employed were in receipt of a salary of f a day. If the Australasian Associations of Trained Nurses would hurry up and substitute legal for voluntary Registration throughout the Commonwealth it would be an immense help to registrationists at home. Surely, with the power of the vote, nurses in Australasia possess the lever to attain just legislation.-ED.

A QUID PRO QUO.

To the Editor of The British Journal of Nursing.

DEAR MADAM,—Our Matron, much against her sense of duty to our training school, is to be compelled to admit voluntary aid workers for a few weeks' training, thus disorganising our ward work. Do you consider we regular probationers have a right to resign ? Several of us feel like it. Yours truly,

A LANCASHIRE LASS.

[If your matron sympathises with the rights of the regular probationers in this matter, we advise you not to resign, but to do all in your power to sympathise with her and see that the routine of the school is as little depreciated as possible.—ED.]

AN INDIGNITY TO WOMEN.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—May I hope you will find space to insert the following letter, which appeared in the *Globe* signed "Paterfamilias." Presumably it is true, and if it is, it is an indecent shame, both for the helpless and insensible women and the boys admitted to the operating theatre. Which hospital is alluded to? Why is its name not given and a public protest made possible?

The following is the letter :---

SIR,—No woman, particularly those who are mothers of our boys, could fail to be disgusted with one at least of the methods adopted for the training of stretcher bearers in our new armies.

A young relative, belonging to one of the Public School battalions, has to-day been taken, with a number of other recruits, to the operating theatre of



