

THE ECONOMIC POSITION OF NURSES.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—It is surprising to find there are still nurses who, like the ostrich, think there is "nothing doing" because they themselves are not cognisant of what is going on. If the correspondent who made such sweeping assertions about the different nursing associations in your last issue had paused to verify her statements, she would have found that they are doing a good deal more than she thinks. She asserts "the economic position of working nurses is persistently ignored." Not so, however. The Professional Union of Trained Nurses has, during the last six months, devoted a very great deal of time to drawing up schedules of hours and salaries, and moreover has taken care that they were brought to the notice of the right people. Some hundreds of copies of schedules have been sent to public health authorities alone. I can even assure her that the chairmen and secretaries she considers so supine had to give up two days of their hard-earned Christmas holidays to attend conferences on these very matters.

You, Madam, have struck the true note when you say that nurses' troubles are largely their own fault. Too long they have expected "something for nothing," and when they wake up to the fact that they get "nothing," they are surprised and annoyed.

If they would follow the advice you have so long given them, and show a little independence of spirit, and work *and pay* for their own organisation there would be a different tale to tell. "Who would be free themselves must strike the blow."

Yours faithfully,

MAUDE MACCALLUM, *Hon. Sec. P.U.T.N.*

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.**"COVERING" THE AMATEUR NURSE.**

Member P.U.T.N.—"I read with interest your note on the report of the Cornwall Joint County Committee of the Order of St. John and the British Red Cross Society at Truro. It is interesting to know that they have agreed to allow their semi-trained members to take the place of the trained woman. You say 'it remains to be seen whether registered nurses intend to "cover" the practice of these workers!' There is a certain district not far from the sound of 'Bow Bells,' where a Sanitary Inspector (not a trained nurse) receives a salary of about £400 per annum as a Tuberculosis Visitor, while in the same district a fully trained and experienced nurse doing the same work receives £200. It is not only First Aid and Home Nursing we have to fear.

"'Ere they hewed the Sphinx's visage
Favouritism governed kissage
Even as it does in this age."

Queen's Nurses' Superintendent.—"I shall certainly invite an expression of professional opinion

from the General Nursing Council, after I am 'registered' as to the ethical conduct of 'covering' V.A.D.'s at Maternity centres, in district nursing, and in tuberculosis nursing. As to their services in voluntary hospitals and in nursing homes, and in the practice of massage in orthopaedic clinics, with that the Queen's Superintendents have nothing to do. The whole proposal of the Cornwall Joint County Committee of the Order of St. John and the British Red Cross (presumably all members of the laity), as reported in the last issue of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, appears to me, and such Queen's Nurses as I have consulted, to be a professional outrage."

[We entirely agree, and it is high time the profession awoke to the true significance of the danger to nursing efficiency which the scheme of the Joint Council British Red Cross and Order of St. John has in preparation, if put in practice. Once trained nurses are "registered" by Act of Parliament they will stand on solid ground as to professional conduct, and they cannot do better than follow the example of the medical profession as to "covering" and call upon the medical faculty to support them.—ED.]

EQUIVALENT STANDARDS IMPERATIVE.

Miss Amy Summers.—"I feel sure the General Nursing Council for England and Wales have the whole nursing profession with them on the "equivalent standards for registration" question, and Scottish and Irish nurses will rue the day if they do not insist on their Councils adopting such a standard as will exclude Cottage Midwife Nurses and V.A.D.'s from the general registers. The matrons on the Councils must stand firm—as you say, "the lay vote is sure to be cast for the employers' point of view."

THE BEST WORTH PAYING FOR.

Sister Mary.—"We hear constant clamour for more money, and far too seldom a demand that by better training we nurses should be worth more money."

OUR PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

January 8th.—What are the principal affections of the skin met with in young children, and what are their underlying causes or origin?

January 15th.—State in detail what precautions must be taken when nursing a case of typhoid fever: (a) to guard against self-infection, (b) to prevent the spread of infection to others.

January 22nd.—What do you know of shingles? What is the meaning of the term, and what is the usual treatment?

January 29th.—What are the points of difference between epilepsy, chorea, and hysteria? Give the treatment and management suitable for each.

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