

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.

THE SHORTAGE OF NURSES.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Just about this time of year when waves of influenza and other climatic ailments are accentuated, the papers cry out about the shortage of nurses; but when we private nurses are out of work for weeks, "eating our heads off," usually during the autumn months, we hear nothing of that. The public is not the sufferer, only we nurses. As at present organised the demand and supply of private nurses is very unsatisfactory, and I was glad to read your Editorial on December 24th on "The Private Nursing Problem," and to see in it a proposal that representatives of private nursing co-operations and associations should meet and discuss the situation and the possibility of adopting a uniform scale of fees. We are hoping in the near future that the title of "Registered Nurse" will be helpful to us, now we have to compete with so many inefficiently trained nurses, who drift into private nursing when found unsuitable for training and good institutional posts. These women exploit the public in a ruthless manner, charging what fees they choose, and just making terms according to what they think a patient can pay. This, of course, is entirely wrong, and if the principal co-operations would come to a decision on the question of fees, and not overcharge or undersell one another, it would be good for all. We cannot possibly save a penny on less than £3 3s. a week, and yet thousands of people cannot afford that fee. Might I suggest a Co-operation of Co-operations, with a Central Charity Fund attached, through which people with small incomes could be supplied with a thoroughly trained nurse at £2 2s. a week? It makes my heart ache sometimes to know that people have to deprive themselves of necessities to supply my services to their nearest and dearest, when through a little organisation help might be forthcoming. Do let us see what we can do.

Yours very sincerely,

A "REGISTERED NURSE."

GOOD WISHES.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I beg to join with all others in wishing you a very happy New Year. May prosperity attend you in your home life and all your public life, especially where the G.N.C. is concerned. I hope the amendment for the word "certificated" will go through. There seem so many difficulties by the way, but hope all will end victoriously for those who are doing so much to help the nursing profession, though I think it is only the older nurses who can really appreciate all that is being done.

I wish it were possible to get Queen Mary's Christmas Card of Princess Mary and Lord Lascelles reproduced on a postcard. I feel sure every member of the nursing profession would like to have it, and if it was sold for 6d. a good sum would be realised towards Princess Mary's Gift.

On the day of the Irish Settlement I felt so overcome that I had just to write the following lines, I wondered whether you would think them worth a tiny corner in your magazine. There are many noble Irish nurses working here in England. I know some personally. Apologising for trespassing on your time,

I am, yours faithfully,

LUCY C. COOPER.

Coast Guard House,
Queenborough.

THE HARP THAT ONCE.

The Harp once more vibrates to call,
When touch'd by loving hand;
Tho' mute so long on Tara's wall,
Whilst mourning with her Land.
For Freedom's Cause so hardly won,
Triumphant strain she gives
Victorious music, drowning gun,
Shall prove that still she lives.

L. C. C.

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

A PUBLIC DUTY.

E. F. T.—"I always read my B.J.N. from cover to cover, and agree with you that those who desire to avail themselves of the great privilege of State Registration should help the Council and officers by conforming to the rules without additional correspondence and waste of stamps. I, for one, knowing as I do how many doubtful women are posing as trained nurses, am only too thankful to know that each applicant's credentials are subjected to keen scrutiny. A midwife in this district who poses and works as a nurse, who applied to be placed on the Nurses' Register and was not eligible, said to me: 'If there's a loophole I'll go for them in the Courts,' which shows how careful must be the consideration given to each case, so as to prevent litigation."

VERY SIGNIFICANT.

M. T. M., Liverpool.—"It is very significant that, as far as I have seen, no protest of any kind whatever has been made either by the Council or Local Centres of the College of Nursing, Ltd., against depriving us of the record of our certificates on the State Register. Shows how dangerous it is for thousands of women to be organised by their employers."

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION QUESTIONS.

January 14th.—How does water become contaminated? What diseases may follow the drinking of impure water? Mention the principal methods by which water may be purified.

January 21st.—What do you understand by hyperpyrexia? State in full the different methods which might be adopted to control it.

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