

WHAT TO READ.

MEMOIRS AND BIOGRAPHY.

- "Letters of William Shenston." Edited by M. Williams.
 "Alexander and the Greeks." Victor Ehrenberg.
 "Young Bess." Margaret Irwin.

FICTION.

- "Lovely is the Lee." Robert Gibbings.
 "The Journey Home." Robert Henriques.
 "The Skater's Waltz." Elizabeth Kyle.
 "Soon Bright Day." Mary Baird Aitken.
 "The Rags of Time." Frances Dale.
 "The Adventurers." Adelaide Eden Phillpotts.
 "Bread and Roses." Ethel Manning.

MISCELLANEOUS.

- "The Peace Conference of 1919." J. S. Marston.
 "The Economic Lessons of the Nineteenth Century."
 "Germany Between Two Wars." Lindley Fraser.
 "The Future of the Colonies." Julian Huxley and Phyllis Deane.
 "Education in Britain: Yesterday, To-day and Tomorrow." R. A. Scott-James.
 "A Boy in Kent." C. Henry Warren.

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 Editor offers her warmest thanks to her kind colleagues who have sent her such encouragement and good wishes for the New Year. As we all realise, it has been a year of strain for us all, but we have come through. At our editorial office and the British College of Nurses, Ltd., located at 19, Queen's Gate, London, conditions are still awaiting the skilled workmen to restore the terrible destruction from blast, and it is evident that many months will elapse before the damage will be rectified. But, of course, the staff is standing up to it, and the day, we hope, will dawn when our College will be fit for human habitation.

NURSES' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCILS.

Should Matrons Have Seats?

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.
 DEAR MADAM,—It is with grave misgiving that one reads in THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, quoted from an article which appeared in the *Public Assistance Journal*, that in the establishment in every hospital of a Nurses' Representative Council, comprised of staff and official sides under a chairman acceptable to both, it is questioned whether or not the Matron should have a seat on the Council!

That in the proposed constitution such Councils are built up through sectional committees comprising the whole of the nurses in each of the categories represented in the hospital, to enable the nursing staff freely to discuss matters connected with their work and efficiency, their comfort and well-being is reasonable. One notes, however, that these meetings will be followed by a meeting of the Council representative of the whole nursing staff and official sides (one presumes the chairman may be from the official side and not a nurse). It is stated "the fact that the matron may not be a member of the Council in no way implies that the Council exists as a counterweight to the Matron's authority." In my opinion that is what such a practice is calculated to result in.

To exclude the Matron from collaboration in Council with her staff, infers mistrust of her authority and sympathy

and moreover, in the proposals of the Liaison Committee set up by the Royal College of Nursing and the British Hospitals Association for the constitution of Nurses Representative Councils, there is all the machinery to undermine the authority and prestige of the Matron and to impair the nurses' loyalty and confidence in her as the professional head of their department.

Yours truly,

COMMON SENSE.

An Assistant Matron writes: "I read the article on 'Nurses' Representative Councils' in the November issue. Apparently, if such a Council is organised in this hospital, I am eligible, but our superior officer, the Matron, is not! The situation could lead to nothing but disorganisation and ill feeling. Personally, I should refuse to be a member of such a Council. I conclude such Councils would speedily eliminate any Matron worth her salt, and substitute the Medical Superintendent as our boss—we all know what the result of that would be."

First Year's Student writes: "If our Matron is to be excluded from conference with the Nursing Staff, when all other ranks are eligible to attend Nurses' Councils, it places us in a most invidious position. Here a porter is now training as a male nurse, and a very superior man he is, but . . . well, fill in the rest . . . where discipline is concerned."

A Sister writes: "I approve of Nursing Councils in hospitals, they might break down barriers. We should have had no de-grading in our profession if we could have made it clear to the Matrons that we objected to registering semi-trained women, but we were never consulted, and our Matron, who is in the Royal College, pushed this retrograde policy without consulting the Nursing Staff in this hospital."

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

Sister Tutor.

An Experienced Matron writes: "I was at the Battersea Polytechnic last week and made enquiries about the new regulations, etc., re Sister Tutor Courses. They have discontinued the part-time courses (except to finish the present course, which now is three years). There are the one-year's courses still going on, but these will have to be two years after the war. This is going to be a hardship for numbers of nurses anxious to become trained sister tutors.

"They will be spending three or four years training and two or three years in special training, and then two years for Sister Tutor's Course. When will they have time to do their actual work?"

"It seems the powers behind the scenes are forgetting that patients are requiring attention, and very few to nurse them.

"The people that are planning all this are not in hospital, or they would not advocate so much of the nurses' time to be spent out of hospitals."

[The curriculum for Sister Tutors is of fundamental importance in the future organisation of nursing standards and will no doubt be the lever for the professional education of matrons, whose personality is *all important*.—ED.]

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