

in due course of time, meet the requirements of those who are prohibited by limited means or other circumstances, from availing themselves of the special comforts, which (*in India*) a Nursing Home could provide. Much has been done in the matters of medical aid, for the natives of India, something more than has as yet been thought of, might surely be secured for *our own people*, too many of whom, unaided by efficient care, have struggled against the terrible effects of bad climate, etc., till the health has been irrevocably impaired. This applies, among others, to Government officers and their families; the appointments held sometimes necessitating a residence in what are, for months in the year, most unhealthy districts. Journeys to the hills are very expensive, and voyages to Europe and back, far too costly, to be lightly undertaken; to say nothing of the peculiar sadness, under such circumstances, of family separations. The first and principal question which arises is: By what method the funds are to be raised, wherewith to start such a Home as has been suggested? It should ultimately, of course, be entirely self-supporting. It is undesirable, that even in ever so slight a degree, private subscriptions in Lower Bengal, should be drawn away from purposes to which they are devoted there; the Local Government donations, being in certain instances, regulated accordingly. The little scheme of a Nursing Home in Calcutta, is as yet, in an embryo state, and any practical suggestions will be gratefully received.—Yours faithfully,

A. WESTMACOTT.

[We refer to this in another column, and shall be pleased to give our correspondent all the help in our power, and any practical information as to the cost and organisation of such a Home which she may require.—ED.]

THE LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL'S VIEWS ON "THE LIVING WAGE"—FOR WOMEN.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—For many years we have heard much of the lavish expenditure of the London County Council, and of the almost Oriental munificence with which they reward their officials. So that when I heard that the Technical Education Committee had at last decided to appoint a teacher in "Sick Nursing," "First Aid to the Injured," and "Hygiene," my hopes ran high. At last, I thought, my efforts will be rewarded; fairy visions of nice little rooms in London, an occasional pretty gown, and a prospective small nucleus in the bank, which would gradually accumulate and form some slight provision for old age, floated before my hopeful eyes. But, alas! for the disappointment that was to come.

With an apology for "personals," I would preface my remarks by saying that I have been engaged, for some ten years, in professional work; that I am considered talented, and my "success" has been largely envied; and yet in all these years of hard and steady work I have never been able to make more money than was absolutely necessary for daily needs.

So that my anticipation of the opening offered by the wealthy, the generous, the munificent London County Council, as affording *some* provision, however slight, for the old age that is inevitable, may easily be understood.

On investigation, it appears, that for a teacher in the important subjects of Sick Nursing, First Aid to the Injured, and Hygiene, the Council is prepared to give £1 18s. 6d. a week! For this, the advertisement sets forth that the applicant must be "not less than 25 years of age, must have had full Hospital training, as well as experience in lecturing."

In spite of my disappointed hopes, and the tumbling of my "Castle in the air" about my luckless ears, I set to work to calculate the chances that such an opening would give.

I found that the "occasional pretty gown" must resolve itself into the sternest of stern serviceable serge dress,

which must last the whole six months of my appointment; that my boots must be of the cheapest and roughest; that my mantle, which would be an absolute necessity to keep out the cold, would make a serious inroad on my slender resources; and that the "nice rooms" I had so fondly evolved out of my sanguine imagination, must come down to the hard level of one room in the top of a cheap house in some low neighbourhood, where apartments were distinctly "nasty" but economical. And, as for my food, it was clear that when I had provided for all my other wants—as of course the County Council would expect their lecturer to look "neat and ladylike"—that the necessary wherewithal to supply the bodily needs would be conspicuous by its absence, and was a matter that the mighty members of the Board had entirely overlooked.

I should have enough for buns and tea, with an occasional wild extravagance of a meal at an aërated bread shop; but meals that would provide for the wear and tear of the life of a lecturer among the poor of London, and give the necessary strength and energy, were entirely out of the question. So that the sum offered does not meet even the requirements of a "Living Wage" of which we hear so much.

Another problem that perplexed my overtaxed brain was this: How in the world was I to live when the six months' engagement was at an end, leaving me stranded in my back attic in the unpromising months of August and September. Other more fortunate workers would be going away to sea or moor for a breath of salt or heather laden air—but I—with the surplus from £1 18s. 6d. a week, must needs condense my summer holiday into a day trip to Clacton-on-Sea!

After reviewing the matter, I have decided not to sell the list of applicants for the post, and am now thinking of qualifying for the music-hall or variety stage. Now-a-days that seems to be the only profession which allows a 'living wage' to its women workers.

The London County Council is not only guilty of an attempt to 'sweat' its employes, but it is, in a sense, defrauding the public by inviting only the incompetent and the unqualified to rank among its teachers. The greater number of provincial County Councils have adopted the principle of cutting their women lecturers down to such a fine point, that it does not pay educated women to hold such positions. The country is flooded with 'sham' Nurses, who, after attending a few lectures on the subject, without training of any kind, without even having seen the interior of a Hospital, are allowed to go forth as missionaries of health; misleading and misguiding the public, while professing to give them instruction.

In my capacity of Lecturer I have frequently come across these persons—garbed, of course, in full Hospital uniform, to which they are no more entitled than is a kitchenmaid—staying at coffee taverns and public-houses and placarding the villages with announcements that Sister so and so will lecture on First Aid to the Injured, etc. At one of these lectures (save the mark!) I heard an ignorant young person gravely assuring a London audience of working women that tea was one of the most powerful brain *foods*, etc. The blind leading the blind into the proverbial ditch! Another instance I can vouch for is the case of another of these imposters having a bed and bedding carried out into a rectory garden, and, in the face of a marvelling village audience, giving a small boy, who was posing as patient, a sponge bath!

Please pardon the length of my letter. My apology for prolonging it thus is to call attention to the injustice to well-trained women of such a starvation pittance, and the injustice to the public in providing them with such dangerously ignorant teaching on so important a subject as Health and Nursing.—Believe me,

A BONA FIDE LECTURER AND
REGISTERED NURSE.

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