



## Letters to the Editor.

NOTES, QUERIES, &c.

*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.*

### OUR TWENTY-POUND PRIZE.

*To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."*

DEAR MADAM,—I am delighted to think I am the winner of the £20 Holiday Prize, for which I enclose receipt, and hope to spend a nice holiday with it. Having had my holiday last month, I shall not be able to send a description of it until later on.

With many thanks, yours truly

F. SHEPPARD.

Kent Nursing Institution, Tunbridge Wells.  
August 5th, 1902.

### AN UNPOPULAR BRANCH OF NURSING.

*To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."*

DEAR MADAM,—In a recent issue, Miss Poole, in her able defence of the nursing profession, apparently assigns to nurses engaged in hospital and district work a greater degree of unselfishness than to those employed in private nursing. This seems to me to be unfair to private nurses, for my experience—which I have no reason to consider unusual—leads me to infer that most nurses of the best class have tried private nursing for a short time, and have relinquished it because they found the hard and unpleasant conditions associated with it to be intolerable. Many, through the report of friends, have been deterred from trying it. For women of gentle breeding, taking every point into consideration, hospital and district work is undoubtedly easier than private nursing, especially as so many of that class have small private means to supplement their professional earnings. They escape the almost certain ruin to health which the private nurse incurs through years of insufficient sleep, bad and irregular feeding, to say nothing of lesser evils. Moreover, private nurses, especially those on co-operations, cannot choose their cases, and as wealthy homes are in the minority so are the cases in such. To one case in a comfortable house a nurse will probably have three or four in houses where there is really no accommodation for her, and where the means are so inadequate for the expenses of illness that she may find the taking of her fee a positive pain. I once met at a case a nurse—needless to say she was not a lady—who told me she took cases only "amongst the aristocracy." As she was on the private staff of her hospital, I have often wondered how she managed it.

If a private nurse be the fortunate possessor of a winning personality, in addition to being clever and capable, I admit she may find the life very pleasant, as she will be able to get her own way without incurring friction; even so, she will not escape the inevitable injury to health. Also, I have the impression that after the effect of her personality is withdrawn, people begin to realise they have been managed, and many resent this! But such nurses, indeed, such

women, are comparatively rare, and, unless actuated by the highest principles they may prove dangerous.

I should like to add that I am aware a general prejudice exists against the managing nurse, but that my contention is the nurse goes to a case for the purpose of assisting the doctor in saving life and restoring to the patient the fullest measure of health possible as quickly as she can; so that every obstacle to this end—and in private nursing there are many—should be skilfully engineered if it may be done without injury to anyone. I may be wrong, but I have never been able to take any other view of sick-nursing.

I am, dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

MENA BELBY.

### PENSIONS FOR JUBILEE NURSES.

*To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."*

DEAR MADAM,—Would it be trespassing too much on your valuable space to make the following suggestions, having read a short while ago in your paper, THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, about the Pension Fund established in the London Hospital to encourage nurses to remain on the staff, which is one of the most sensible and most beneficial things that could be thought of, both for the nurses and the Institute. Now-a-days one reads so much of what is being done for the hospitals, that to see the nurses thought of in the least is something fresh; and is it not high time that some good individual should take up the same theme and establish a Pension Fund for the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute for Nurses, in order that they, too, may have some object to encourage them to work for, as they seem to be left quite as much out in the cold, as any nurse whose health compels her to keep to district nursing. With a salary of £35 a year a district nurse cannot possibly secure a living for her old age, besides the fact of never having any chance whatever of promotion or increase during the many years she will have given to the Institute. Would it not be a national benefit for someone to take up and to look after pensions for these nurses?

I remain, dear Madam,

Yours very truly,

PATRICK.

### FLOATING HOSPITALS.

*To the Editor of the "British Journal of Nursing."*

DEAR MADAM,—I have been very interested recently to read the remarks and correspondence in your valuable journal on the subject of floating hospitals. The idea has always attracted me, and once when holding the position of matron of a hospital in a malarious tropical seaport, when there was some idea of rebuilding it on a different site, I suggested to the authorities the desirability of a floating hospital in the harbour. In doing so, the following reasons appealed to me:—(1) The health of the officers and men on board the men-of-war stationed in the harbour was better, and there was less malaria amongst them than amongst the residents in the town. (2) When we had a desperate case in the hospital, the patient was usually sent to sea, if a passenger ship came in, as the one chance of saving his life. (3) By the courtesy and kindness of the captains of the ships in the harbour, if no such passenger ship were available a patient was sometimes kindly received on board one of these ships in order that he might benefit by the cool sea breezes and

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