

as the four donors of £5,000 each would be the "first to acknowledge" the work of the originator of the Pension Fund, so the "originator" must be desirous of acknowledging these gentlemen as at least part founders of the Fund with which his name is associated. So, at least, it appears to a plain and unsophisticated person.—Yours faithfully,

PERFLEXED.

[We think all our readers will agree that ample latitude has been allowed to the expression of all shades of opinion in these columns on the subject of the Royal National Pension Fund for Nurses, and this correspondence must now cease. We shall be pleased, if it falls in with their wishes, to furnish Miss Brinton and "M.R.B.N.A." with each other's address, and they can then pursue the question further. Our own view of this Fund is that its name is misleading. It is known as the "Nurses' Pension Fund," but we believe it is open to hospital officials of all grades. Why, then, should its name imply that it is a Fund exclusively for the benefit of nurses? Again, a pension, to quote a standard dictionary, is "an annual allowance for past services"; but there is no question of such an allowance in the case of the National Pension Fund, which is a Life Assurance Society into which members pay for the benefits which they ultimately receive. The regulation quoted by Miss Wilson, in regard to the interest on premiums withdrawn, appears to us ambiguously worded, and it would be well if it were plainly stated that no interest is given on premiums returned. If nurses use a life insurance society as a bank for a short period we are inclined to think that the management is justified in using the interest obtained on their money for working expenses, and in looking after those persons who remain in the Fund; but this should be made plain, so that nurses understand it is the rule from the first, and consequently are not disappointed when they receive no interest on withdrawing their money.

A point in connection with this Fund which we regard as most undesirable is that some hospital committees compel their nurses to subscribe to it, and a portion of their earnings is subtracted and paid for them into the Pension Fund. This appears to us an unjustifiable interference with the liberty of the subject.

Again, in Sir Henry Burdett's speech as reported at Glasgow, the prospects held out to nurses who join the Fund were so rosy that it was calculated to impress them that all subscribers would receive a competence which would provide them with comfort in their old age, whereas the fact is that if a nurse stints herself all her working days she cannot by this means make adequate provision for the days when she will work no longer. We shall probably be in a minority in supporting the views of those nurses who object to be marshalled about by drill sergeants before a titled audience, like charity school children, simply because like sensible persons they have joined a life assurance society. We know, however, that we are not alone in this view, for a leading Matron, upon whom considerable pressure was brought to bear to parade at one of these functions, protested that "wild horses would not drag her there." We may say that the letters we have recently published on the subject of this Fund are not the only ones in our possession. In 1900 a nurse wrote to us as

follows:—"I joined the Nurses' Pension Fund three years and three months ago, and wanted to withdraw my money. I have paid into the Fund £83 8s. 9d., the cheque I received is £77 5s., so that they have deducted £6 3s. 9d. I have written to Sir Henry Burdett; he has not chosen to answer my letter. I have to support my mother. . . . It is dreadful for me to lose this sum; it is bad enough to have no interest." It will thus be seen that for some years past similar complaints to those now made have been expressed against the working of the Pension Fund. The Council should carefully instruct policy-holders that upon their withdrawal from the Fund they are not entitled to any bonus, nor practically to any interest. At the same time, even if they think themselves aggrieved, perhaps because they have not understood the rules, no persons should make statements in print which they are not prepared to substantiate.—Ed.]

Comments and Replies.

Miss Lucy Bromley.—The Home for Chronic and Incurable Diseases at Leamington is a very charming and comfortable one. The Matron would furnish you with all particulars. Possibly the St. Peter's Home, Mortimer Road, Kilburn, would meet your requirements. Such a case would be well taken care of there.

Anxious Mother.—You will find all particulars as to the terms of training at the principal nurse-training schools in the Nursing Directory (11, Adam Street, Strand, W.C., price 5s.). We quite appreciate your desire to give your daughters, as well as your sons, an education which will fit them to earn their own living. The irresponsible way in which parents allow their daughters to grow up, with no provision for their future and no profession by means of which they can support themselves, is unutterably sad. Such an attitude of mind presumably means that daughters are intended for the matrimonial market. In our view, the only self-respecting line to take is to educate them to be self-supporting. Then if the opportunity of marriage presents itself they can consider the question without a bias in its favour as a means, perhaps the only means, of deliverance from the workhouse in the future.

Miss E. J. O'Connor.—You can obtain all information as to the examinations of the British Gynaecological Society from Dr. Aarons, 14, Stratford Place, W.

Notices.

STATE REGISTRATION OF NURSES.

The annual report of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses has been published, and can be obtained on application to the Hon. Secretary, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, price 1½d., post free, or 7d. for six copies. All nurses should obtain a copy of this report, and acquaint themselves with the history and progress of the Registration movement. Application forms for membership of the Society can be obtained from the same address.

OUR PRIZE PUZZLE.

Rules for competing for the Pictorial Puzzle Prize will be found on Advertisement page VIII.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)