

Again, in relation to the public. As nurses exist for the public benefit, the point of view of those who hold that the public should have representation on the governing body has much to commend it. Here, again, experienced educationalists could afford valuable help, and I can conceive that the aid of a woman of ripe experience and liberal views in educational and hospital matters, such as Miss Louisa Stevenson, of Edinburgh, would be invaluable to the Council if it could be secured.

The point I wish to make is that either the Board must be composed exclusively of nurses, or representatives of medical and public interests must both be placed upon it.—I am, dear Madam, Yours faithfully,
LOGIC.

THE SCAVENGERS OF THE NURSING PROFESSION.

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

DEAR MADAM,—You draw attention in your last issue to a happy phrase used by Mr. Douglas Bryan when he says that "the medical profession have no wish to be the scavengers of the nursing profession." They are wise. If they wish to maintain a dignified attitude their only course is to "let the nurses manage their own affairs." This is the plan adopted by medical men in the United States. They help nurses to organise, but they refrain, as a body, from any attempt to manage the Nurses' Associations. Consequently, harmony and good feeling characterise the relations of medical men and nurses in America. Contrast this with the attempted autocracy on the part of a few medical men in the Royal British Nurses' Association, the unseemly struggles which ensued, and the insolent treatment of the Matrons who consistently supported a policy which they knew to be for the good of their own profession. Their position became so intolerable, so subversive of all discipline, that at last they felt the only course open to them was to resign their membership—to their credit be it said, distinctly stating their reasons for this course. When the history of the organisation of the nursing profession in this country comes to be written, I venture to think that the laurels will be awarded by posterity to those women who so bravely fought for their principles; their names will be honoured for all time long after those of the medical autocrats whose tyrannous conduct went near to ruin this once prosperous Association are forgotten. The lesson of its downfall will not have been in vain if we have learnt that in disciplinary matters the control of nurses must be in the hands of nurses.—I am, dear Madam, Yours faithfully,

A FORMER MEMBER OF THE R.B.N.A.

THE DIFFICULTIES OF INFIRMARY MATRONS.

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

DEAR MADAM,—Many Infirmary Matrons will want an answer to the letter in last week's issue from "A Disgusted Citizen," in which he wants to know if the letter accusing an Infirmary Matron and the Chairman of immorality is privileged, as the Guardians found "that any suggestion of the kind is cruel and unjustifiable." Year by year, owing to one cause or another, the work and difficulties of Poor Law Infirmary Matrons seem to increase—I speak feelingly from

personal experience. The obsolete laws in relation to nursing under which a Matron accepts office are known to few of us, and we are only able to maintain order and discipline on sufferance—if the medical superintendent happens to be a just man, and if the majority of the Guardians are drawn from a fairly educated class. But my experience proves that there is always a Sowood on every board, ready—nay, willing—to believe evil of officials of a superior class to his own, and that this type of person invariably poses as the knight-errant of the undisciplined and undesirable element on the staff, unfortunately fostered by Poor Law administration in many infirmaries. The truth is, one accepts office under the Poor Law at the peril of one's good name, personal and professional; and it appears to me that work ready to the hand of associations of Infirmary Matrons or the Matrons' Council is in organising a Society of Poor Law nurses to demand a Parliamentary Act to place the Nursing Department on a sound professional footing. It is useless, after the "qualified nurse" suggestion, to hope for sound reform through the Local Government Board.

The mental anxiety and suffering of conscientious women who don't wink at abuses under the Poor Law is inestimable; nothing on earth would induce me to continue under its demoralising authority. It is high time the whole system was swept away and new laws enacted.—I am, Yours truly,

ONE WHO SYMPATHISES WITH POOR-LAW VICTIMS.

Comments and Replies.

To our Correspondents.—We are still receiving letters in relation to the Royal National Pension Fund for Nurses, but as they raise no fresh points of general interest we cannot reopen a correspondence which we have already closed. We should advise any policy-holders who feel themselves aggrieved to write to the Council of the Fund or to one of the six London Hospital Matrons who act as their representatives.

Army Nursing Service Reserve.—The Report of His Majesty's Commissioners appointed to inquire into the military preparations and other matters connected with the war in South Africa, and the minutes of evidence are published in three Blue Books, and obtainable from Eyre and Spottiswoode, East Harding Street, Fleet Street, E.C. The cost of the Report is 2s. 7d., and the minutes of evidence 4s. 5d. and 5s. 11d. respectively. We propose to review the chief points of interest to nurses in the evidence from week to week, as we do not think that a large number will buy these volumes, and they contain much interesting information in regard to the lessons to be learnt from the war.

Sister Wood.—Mrs. Palmer's address is 56, Westminster Mansions, Great Smith Street, Westminster. She has a high reputation as a teacher of massage.

Notice.

OUR PRIZE PUZZLE.

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

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