

ing of nurses only because it is their duty to provide the sick under their care with proper nursing care, and the training-school system has proved to be the cheapest and best method of so doing. The education of nurses, therefore, is an incidental, not a primary, part of their work.

On the other hand, it is manifestly to the interest of the public that nursing education should be as efficient and thorough as possible. Who is to ensure that the educational system for nurses is such as will make them serviceable to the public as well as useful in hospital wards? Manifestly, only the Central Governing Body, having State authority, against the establishment of which the Central Hospital Council is now fighting. It is impossible not to discount the value of the opinion of any society on its defence, and it appears to me that is the position of the Hospital Council.—I am, Dear Madam, Yours faithfully,

REGISTRATION.

[The point that nursing interests are not represented on the Central Hospital Council is a most important one. In January, 1897, we wrote in this journal in relation to the proposed Central Hospital Board: "Should such a Board ultimately become active it is probable that the nursing interests might become involved, and it is, therefore, of importance to nurses that they should be efficiently represented on such a body."—*Ed.*]

#### THEORY AND PRACTICE.

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

DEAR MADAM,—Now that the question of the amount of theory which it is desirable that a nurse should know is so often discussed, may I give you my opinion as a private nurse. My experience is that the more one learns the more one wants to learn, and, although months of experience may be worth years of theoretical knowledge, surely this is far from useless and waste of time. The more a nurse, especially a private nurse, knows, the more harmony exists between her and the doctor, for we realise then that we do not know sufficient to take more than our own responsibility. We have the most dangerous drugs to administer: is it right that we should take that responsibility without understanding their action? The doctor prescribes the drug, but the nurse must note its effect upon the patient, for he is not present to do so. We all know that certain patients have idiosyncrasies as regards certain drugs, and a doctor may not be aware of such idiosyncrasies, for, when an immediate operation is necessary (for instance), the patient may have come under his care for the first time just before the event. Careful observation subsequent to its administration must therefore be made, and such observation is almost invariably entrusted to the nurse.

Again, in cases of heart failure, it is often a nurse's duty to administer hypodermic injections of very powerful drugs. If she does not know not only the technique of administration, but the action of the drugs she is administering, and the necessity for extreme accuracy, she is a most unsafe person to be entrusted with this duty. Yet, if she were not capable of performing it, in many cases by the time the doctor had been summoned and arrived the patient would be beyond the need of treatment.

I think it is certain that with the present demands made upon us by the medical profession nurses are

most unsafe people if they work in the dark, ignorant of the effect of their actions. In my opinion it would be just as safe to put a loaded revolver into the hands of a child, with the injunction that he is not to pull the trigger, as to require the administration of dangerous drugs by nurses, as a matter of blind obedience. Some time or other the child will almost inevitably pull the trigger, and some time or other a nurse, with the familiarity which breeds contempt, and in ignorance of consequences, will neglect some apparently small precaution with disastrous result. In all fairness, if we are considered competent to be entrusted with most responsible duties we should know how to perform them as intelligent, responsible persons, not as automata. I do not think a nurse can ever know too much. The ignorant nurse is the dangerous nurse, and the one who encroaches on the doctor's province. The intelligent nurse knows better.

I am, dear Madam,  
Yours faithfully,  
PRIVATE NURSE.

#### Comments and Replies.

*Java.*—Java is a Dutch possession; it is situated only a short distance from the Equator, and the climate is one of tropical heat and moisture. We know of no English nursing institution there. We should advise you to apply to the Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Company, 25, Cockspur Street, London, S.W., and to the Netherland and Rotterdam Lloyd Steamship Companies for information as to passage out.

*Enquirer.*—We should advise you to write to the Hon. Superintendent, Friedenheim Hospital, Sunnyside, Upper Avenue Road, Swiss Cottage, N.W.; the Mother Superior, St. Peter's Home, Kilburn, N.W.; the Sister-in-Charge, St. Peter's Memorial Home, Maybury, Woking; the Sister-in-Charge, St. Saviour's Hospital, Osnaburgh Street, London, W.; the Matron, The Midland Counties Home, Leamington; the Sister Superior, St. John the Evangelist's Home, Cowley, Oxford. At any of these you would probably find what you want.

*New Brighton.*—We should suggest your writing to the Matron of the National Hospital for Paralysis and Epilepsy, Queen Square, London, W.C. Mrs. Palmer, 56, Westminster Mansions, Great Smith Street, Westminster, London, S.W., and Dr. Fletcher Little, 32, Harley Street, Cavendish Square, give excellent courses of instruction in massage. The Incorporated Society of Trained Masseuses, 12, Buckingham Street, Strand, London, W.C., might help you.

#### Notices.

##### THE SOCIETY FOR STATE REGISTRATION OF TRAINED NURSES.

The Annual Report, 1903-04, is now ready. All those interested in the efficient organisation of nursing should procure it from the Hon. Secretary, 431, Oxford Street, London, W. Six copies, post free, 7d., or one copy 1½d. Gives brief review of the history of State Registration of Nurses.

##### OUR PRIZE PUZZLE.

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

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