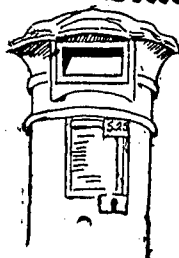


Letters to the Editor.



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.

THE TRUTH ABOUT NURSES' REGISTRATION IN NEW ZEALAND.

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

MADAM,—I notice in your publication of January 30th, 1909, an extract from a letter written by Dr. Coutts, of the Central Hospital Council for London, in which he states that "there is evidence that in the Colonies registration has resulted in a lowering of the social status and education of those entering the nursing profession, and has led to a diminution of the standard of training."

Writing as the Registrar of Nurses under the "Nurses Registration Act, 1901," of New Zealand, which is one of the only two colonies in which State Registration of Nurses is in force, I must protest against such an assertion.

It is now eight years since the Bill for the State Registration of Nurses was passed, and yearly the training in the various hospitals has improved. The necessity of an adequate general education has been emphasised, by the difficulty of passing the examinations, and most hospitals exact a high standard before admitting candidates as trainees. The examinations, both written and practical, have been made more searching, and, by the appointment of a Board of Examiners, consisting of leading medical practitioners and nurses in the chief centres for a term of years, more uniform.

The social status of the nurses has certainly not been lowered, and, as heretofore, the applicants for training in hospitals come from the educated classes—that is, they are the daughters of medical men, clergymen, merchants, and also from the farming class. Those who will make excellent nurses are not confined to one social grade, and so long as they have the personal character, the physical aptitude, and sufficient education to comprehend the theoretical as well as the practical portion of their work there is no need to shut out from the ranks of the trained nurse any woman who will be able to do good service.

There is no idea in this country of having the term of training reduced from three to two years, the tendency, on the contrary, with the larger hospitals, being to induce their nurses to stay a fourth year and undertake post graduate special work.

I have the honour to be, Madam,

Your obedient servant,

T. N. A. VALINTINE.

Inspector-General of Hospitals and Registrar of Nurses.

Department of Hospitals and Charitable Aid,
Wellington, New Zealand.

March 27th, 1909.

[We greatly appreciate Dr. Valintine's kindness

in writing to disprove the assertion, which he quotes above, made by Dr. Coutts, and which occurred in a letter to the *British Medical Journal*. These unwarrantable statements, made in print by those who desire trained nursing to remain unorganised, obtain much publicity, and are difficult to refute.—Ed.]

THE LAW OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND.

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

DEAR MADAM,—In your Editorial of April 24th, the following sentence occurs:

"It is sometimes asserted that fully-trained nurses will not stay in country parishes, but the fact that Queen's Nurses are to be found working in the loneliest parts of Scotland and Ireland disposes of this suggestion."

Will you allow me to explain the error involved in this view of the matter.

The explanation is simply that the two countries mentioned are much smaller than England, and therefore the number of Queen's Nurses working produce a sufficiency. There are a great many more Queen's Nurses working in England than in either of them. But there are most emphatically not enough to meet the demand. Any experienced Superintendent of a rural area will support my statement.

Yours faithfully,

E. L. C. EDEN.

The Grange, Kingston, Taunton.

[In this country, over-crowded as it is with young women who must earn their own living, the supply of any class of workers resolves itself into a question of economics. Women's salaries are lower, as a rule, in Scotland and Ireland than in England. Queen's Nurses are paid as they should be, an equal sum in each country, but if the salary offered is not sufficient to procure the number of nurses required in England, higher remuneration would probably do it. Not because working women are avaricious, but because the standard of living tends to rise, so salaries must also rise to meet expenses. A good cook can command £40 per annum, a skilled one much more. Is the skill of a cook of greater value than that of a trained nurse, or is the care of the sick poor of less importance than one's own dinner? Is charity as "kind" and unselfish as it should be? Sometimes we doubt it when it is a matter of providing the skilled work of women for the poor.—Ed.]

HOW THE PUBLIC WOULD BENEFIT BY STATE REGISTRATION.

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

DEAR MADAM,—Would you be kind enough to tell me if, when the Bill for State Registration passes, it will prevent a caretaker and his wife being appointed to take full charge of a fever hospital which is to receive cases of scarlet, enteric, diphtheria, measles, etc. The person referred to has no training in nursing, she is Matron, house-keeper, and when there are more cases than she can manage there will be nurses taken in from nursing homes.

I know several nurses who have gone in for train-

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