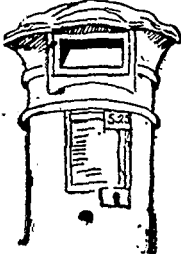


## Letters to the Editor.



*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 SCARCITY OF DISTRICT NURSES.

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

DEAR MADAM,—In reply to "County Superintendent's" letter, published 9th January, 1909, on "The Scarcity of District Nurses," I may say that I am a District Nurse in a district where no place at all (far less a house) is provided for the nurse, and good lodgings and comfortable are not to be had. My salary is 22s. weekly, but what would I not give just for a wee, tiny bit house of my own? It is worth (taking the comfort derived from such into account) 10s. weekly. In lodgings you can't keep to yourself as you would like, for neighbours drop in. I am a C.M.B. and a Registered Nurse, besides having the best testimonials of health to be had. Perhaps "County Superintendent" would tell me, through your paper, where the vacant districts are?

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
A CONSTANT READER.

[We shall be pleased to forward any letters to "A Constant Reader."—ED.]

### THE ADMINISTRATION OF POISONS.

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

DEAR MADAM,—It is inconceivable that in any institution in these days—in any days for that matter—medicines should be administered to patients by the happy-go-lucky method of identifying them by their colour. Is not this carrying to an extreme limit the theory that "a nurse's only duty is to obey," and a demonstration of what may happen when this is put into practice. A nurse should mix medicines as an artist mixes his paints, "with brains," if tragedies are not to occur. What would be said if a man were given gun-powder to handle without being informed of its inflammable nature, with directions that he was to do as he was told. Would not the authorities be justly blamed, if any accident occurred, if the man had not been warned of the dangerous character of the material he was handling? And if a nurse is directed to give poisonous drugs is it not clearly the duty of those who give the order to inform her of their nature, and to warn her of the possible consequences of any mistake, and also of the effects of the drugs she administers, and the symptoms she should watch for, and report if they occur?

Is a nurse's only duty to obey? I do not think so. Her duty is, no doubt, to faithfully carry out medical directions, but they must be carried out with intelligence. What, indeed, is the difference between trained and untrained help but that the untrained woman must blindly follow directions

because she does not understand, and that the trained woman also follows directions, but not blindly, rather loyally and intelligently, because she does understand, and for this reason may be trusted to inform the medical attendant of circumstances which may lead him to alter his previous directions. It is just this power of understanding which is of such great value in the trained nurse. Blind obedience has had its day.

Yours faithfully,

COMMON SENSE.

## Comments and Replies.

*Enquirer.*—You probably mean the Canine Nurses' Institute at 45, Barrington Road, Brixton, where nurses are trained to take care of sick dogs under the direction of veterinary surgeons. When trained these nurses can earn 25s. a week, with board and lodging. They wear a uniform, and a badge on which the letters C.N.I. are embroidered.

### NOTICE.

#### OFFICIAL ORGAN.

The BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING is the official organ of the following important Nursing societies:

The Matrons' Council of Great Britain and Ireland.

The International Council of Nurses.

The National Council of Trained Nurses of Great Britain and Ireland.

The Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses

The Registered Nurses' Society.

The School Nurses' League.

As their official organ is widely read by the members of these societies, the Editor will at all times be pleased to find space for items of news from the Secretaries and members.

Exclusive news being copyright, papers quoting from our columns must give the name of this journal as the source of their information.

## Notices.

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

An application form for those who wish to become members of the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses will be found on page iii. of cover. It will soon be too late to help on the important work of this Society. No habitual reader of this journal can, we feel sure, be content to stand aside and let others found the future Profession of Nursing. Now is the time to help.

#### CONTRIBUTIONS.

The Editor will at all times be pleased to consider articles of a suitable nature for insertion in this Journal—those on practical nursing are specially invited.

Such communications must be duly authenticated with name and address, and should be addressed to the Editor, 20, Upper Wimpole Street, London, W.

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