

The heads of Scottish hospitals have been strangely antagonistic to the education of nurses on the subject of State Registration, but nurses are not a subject class of workers, and will not be kept in darkness when they desire light.

I am, dear Madam,

Yours faithfully,

E. A. STEVENSON.

The Valley, Trinity, Brechin.

#### NURSING IN INDIA.

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

DEAR MADAM,—In your issue of September 25th you publish a letter supposed to have been written by a nurse of the Medical College Hospital, Calcutta, containing an account of the various grievances of the staff. I hope, in justice to those who are responsible for the comfort and well-being of the nurses, you will also make public these few facts.

The nurse in question was a probationer, who had been on the staff exactly ten days. She did not speak from her own experience, but from what she was told, or imagined, with the result that nearly all her information is absolutely incorrect.

Food is good, well cooked, and very plentiful, and no one need go for 22 hours without a substantial meal.

Two days out of five the nurses have 10½ hours' duty, one day 8½; and after night duty (once in five days, and 8½ hours long) they get 24 hours off.

A staff nurse's salary is from £39 to £47 per annum, and the probationers, after four months, get £24 per annum. As it was found impossible to get the nurses on duty punctually in the morning without some punishment, fines, have been instituted—twopence for being five minutes late; fourpence if any later. Probationers are fined half this amount. Of course, the remedy for this state of affairs is in the nurses' own hands, and lately there has been a great improvement. Before the fines were instituted anything between half and three-quarters of an hour late was considered near enough.

The training of nurses in India is very difficult and disheartening. Eurasians and country-bred Europeans, almost the only material available, are most unsuitable. They come from homes where no meal is ever served twice running at the same hour, and domestic work is looked upon as "menial" and "degrading." Two firm beliefs they have: "Time was made for slaves," and "What is good enough for my grandmother is good enough for me." The last is the rock on which all attempts at improvements are hopelessly wrecked.

Of course, in one or two hospitals out here, where discipline is very strict and rigidly enforced, the standard of nursing is much higher. But public opinion in Calcutta is very much set against any sort of discipline for nurses.

Yours truly,

H. M. THACKER.

Medical College, Hospital, Calcutta.

[There is no doubt that the nursing question is a difficult one in India, but this letter proves that reform and better discipline in the management of the Medical College Hospital are required. It con-

tains 298 beds, and the average number occupied is given as 315. That is, there are, on an average, 17 more patients than beds! To nurse these 315 patients the staff of senior and junior nurses and probationers combined is—including one sister-superintendent—30! It is reported that 18 rupees a month per head is the cost of the nurses' food, and that once in five days they take a night's duty. If on duty only 8½ hours nothing can be more disturbing to health than this constant shifting on day and night duty. Just regulations should be drawn up for the work and education of nurses, and then discipline and punctuality should be maintained. We have some splendidly disciplined Indian troops—why not well disciplined nursing corps—or are not pure Indian women encouraged to train? We hope our correspondent will tell us more on this interesting question. Hasn't it got something to do with India for its own people?—Ed.]

#### THE CASE OF NURSE BELLAMY.

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

DEAR MADAM,—I am much interested in the case of Nurse Bellamy, who has now to defend herself against a charge of manslaughter in connection with the recent death of a patient in an Infirmary. When all the facts are disclosed in a Court of law, I feel confident that they will be seen to bear a very different complexion from that which they seem to have borne at the inquest. As, however, Nurse Bellamy has no means beyond what she earns—she has been dismissed by the Guardians—she is now entirely dependent on her friends, who are in a humble position, and in consequence finds extreme difficulty in raising the necessary funds.

For eight years, Nurse Bellamy has served under the Metropolitan Asylums Board, and the character she has had from them has uniformly been excellent, but unless she is enabled now to defend herself she will lie under a fatal stigma for the rest of her life.

This is a case which requires the fullest enquiry, and I am anxious that it should be had, though it will be necessarily an expensive matter. It has occurred to me that many of your readers would be glad to help a sister in distress. Any contributions will be most gratefully received and carefully applied, and may be sent to me here.

Yours truly,

WALTER M. ASTE,

Curate of St. Luke, Battersea.

P.S.—Nurse Bellamy has served three years as Nurse, but has no certificate.

1, Ballingdon Road,  
Battersea, S.W.

[On Tuesday, Nurse Bellamy was committed for trial at the Herts Assizes. No doubt a strong appeal will be made to disprove her responsibility, the Guardians having employed an uncertificated person.—Ed.]

#### Notices.

##### OUR PUZZLE COMPETITION.

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

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