

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 MATRONS' COUNCIL.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—As a member of the above Council may I congratulate all those concerned on organizing such a splendid meeting at Wigan, as reported this week. I was pleased to note how unanimous all present were on the question of State Registration. I have written to our Member of Parliament and have his promise of support for our Bill. As Miss Mollett said, there is no clear reason or sound argument against it. Let us all work hard for it this winter; that the governors of a few London hospitals and their highly-paid officials should have prevented it so long is as ungenerous as it is unjust. The average Member is in favour of protecting a high standard of nursing, but rich industrial magnates who make huge profits out of their female "hands" now govern, and we must remember they fear nothing so much as the organisation of any class of women workers. It is the same with London hospital magnates. I would sign my name, but that on previous occasions the anti-registrationists have drawn attention to my "public" work in quarters which might injure my power of self-support.

Yours very truly,

AN OLD MEMBER OF MATRONS' COUNCIL.

CHEAP NURSING AND SWEATED LABOUR.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I was glad to see a letter from Mr. H. R. Bruxner, the Hon. Secretary of the Staffordshire County Nursing Association, in your issue of November 2nd as it gives vividly the point of view of the members of such Associations in their relation to nursing the rural poor, and, incidentally, their entire lack of appreciation concerning what trained nursing is—or should be.

It is now nearly thirty years since I was interested in district nursing—in connection with the Metropolitan Nursing Association—housed still in Bloomsbury Square, and I well remember the first qualifications for members of that body were that they should be cultured, refined, educated women—trained to the best standard of nursing then accepted, and that such culture was considered the very best asset for a woman who was to influence those in sickness less fortunate socially than herself. It is almost incredible that district nursing can have deteriorated to its present status—and that these highly-trained, devoted gentlewomen have been superseded by mill hands—who cannot

begin to perform the duties of sanitary teachers, such as I claim district nurses should be. In my opinion it is high time to call halt in the downward grade of district nursing in rural places, and to make well meaning laymen understand they have no right, even if they have the power, and self-sufficiency, to control Associations defining the quality of nursing for poor sick people. Mr. Bruxner's letter is ample proof of the absolute ignorance of many people who assume such responsibility without any expert knowledge of the question.

I am, yours, &c.,

A PIONEER DISTRICT NURSE.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I have retired from a committee in the rural district in which I live, because from past experience I feel most strongly that we more fortunate members of the community have no right to provide semi-trained nurses even if they are midwives, to attend on the village people. The system of inspection by ladies who live several hours away was most unsatisfactory. Our inspector knew little of what went on during her months of absence—and the policy of our committee was "least said, soonest mended," so nobody reported delinquencies to her. Inspection was a farce. I retired when cases of puerperal fever and two deaths occurred in our district because the doctor would not acknowledge that the midwifery nurse was to blame. She was dirty and untidy in her person, uncouth in manner, and neglected her duties. Nothing of this was reported to the inspector!

Yours truly,

ONE WHO DECLINES RESPONSIBILITY.

P.S.—I may add I am of opinion that a thoroughly trained nurse, plus a midwifery certificate, is the only person who ought to be a district nurse where one is often miles from a doctor.

THE REGISTRATION OF NURSING HOMES.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR EDITOR,—Permit me to express much interest and general approbation of the scheme for registering nursing homes you are engaged in forwarding, as I know of some that would be far better closed or ignored, and others that merit wider recognition. But in keeping the letter of the rules, may it not happen that some of the very best will be condemned if the rules as at present framed allow of no exceptions? It touches me on a point in which I can sympathise with others. Practically it is never likely to affect me personally because I am doing so well abroad that I have not the least desire to return and compete in the overstocked British market. Briefly, the circumstances are these: Some twenty years ago I applied to several of the big London hospitals for training. The "personal interview" always clinched the matter. I "looked too delicate," and so was refused. But one Matron kindly

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