

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 ORGANISER."

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—This week's article in the JOURNAL on "The Organiser" greatly interests me, and I cordially endorse the criticisms therein contained. I emphatically object to receive such anonymous communications. Not long ago one reached me in connection with the business of the Home in which I work, presumably from the same source, signed "The Editor." A day or two after it was followed up by a second letter which contained "greatly surprised" enquiries as to why its forerunner had not been answered! To expect a professional or a business woman to entertain anonymous appeals shows an amazing ignorance of the responsibility resting on a trained nurse, in whatsoever capacity she may be employed. The danger to the ethical standards of our profession of permitting unprofessional, anonymous influence and control in its counsels cannot be over-rated, or too determinedly discouraged by professional nurses.

Yours faithfully,
ELLEN B. KINGSFORD.

Fallow Corner, North Finchley.

THE DEPRECIATION OF DISTRICT NURSING.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—You must forgive me for saying that your article of the 16th ult., under the above heading, is a delightful example of what would happen if women ever got into Parliament. Reason would play second fiddle to emotion.

Your scheme of nursing the whole population with fully-trained hospital nurses, of a high social position, at the expense of the ratepayers, may be a heavenly vision, or may be *ægri insomnia vana*, but it is, most assuredly, not practicable at present.

The question, therefore, is not whether it is better to give scholarships to already trained nurses than to teach midwifery and help girls to rise in the world, but whether it is better to assist the poor and suffering with the best means available, or to leave them to stew in their own juice.

Is not half a loaf better than no bread?

If broadcloth is unattainable, is not fustian preferable to a fig leaf?

You say No. Either a first-class service or nothing. I say Yes. Do the best you can with what you can get. What would you do with those who need help pending the realization of your prayers and aspirations?

As regards your ill-tempered criticisms of County Nursing Associations, which I presume include the Queen's Institute, under whose skilled supervision

we work, I can safely leave the Queen's and other County Associations to defend themselves.

But for my own County Association I can most emphatically assert that your allegation of laymen and women without any practical experience degrading the standards of the nursing profession is absolutely and entirely untrue. It is quite evident that in this instance at all events you wrote of what you were entirely ignorant. We have on our Executive Committee and in our Superintendents not only persons of very large practical experience in nursing, but experts and recognised authorities on this subject and on all matters connected therewith.

And so far from degrading the standard of nursing it is being raised every day. What sort of nursing obtained before this Association was started?

Was the Holt-Ockley system better than what we practise? And the reason why we send village nurses, who are under constant expert supervision, and are learning more and more daily, to local associations is because there is a great demand for them, and because local associations, which are mostly provident or co-operative Societies, cannot afford a better article.

As to "sweated labour," you do not question my assertion that it is reasonable for the novice's pay to be small during her first period of service, or that her pay compares favourably with that earned by men and boys. What do you pay a hospital nurse during the two first years of her pupilage?

It is surely against your democratic principles to argue that a skilled nurse cannot arise from the class of girls who go into shops or factories. Would you insist that all your nurses should be descendants of peers or of the landed gentry, or where do you draw the social line?

Is not Sergeant Whatisname often a better drill instructor than his Captain?

Finally, I may remind you that nurses of whatever grade are servants of the public and adjuncts of the medical profession, without whom they are impotent; that the former may and will employ what they want, not what you think they ought to want, and you may as well attempt to dictate to the ratepayer what class of nurse he shall employ, as my cook may attempt to force me to go through an elaborate French menu when I infinitely prefer a mutton chop.

May I also say that you have a long and weary road in front of you; that it is surely better to utilize existing conditions and enlist the help and sympathy of those who are working in the same field, than to attempt to gain your desired end by violence, whether of language or otherwise, which will help your protégées about as much as breaking a Regent Street window will help you to get a vote.

Yours faithfully,
H. R. BRUXNER,
Hon. Sec., Staffordshire County
Nursing Association.

Chaseley House, Rugeley.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)