

## 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.*

## NURSES AND BLACK PLAGUE.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—In reading over the Agenda for the Conference in Dublin, I was pleased to see that "Venereal Disease" is to be given an important place. Knowing that you have always the welfare of women—and particularly of nurses—at heart, I should like to draw your attention to the letter which I was forced to write to the *Guy's Hospital Gazette* while O.P. Sister, and which was almost immediately followed by some good results.

I did not think of this going beyond the hospital. I think THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING could do a great deal in bringing this subject before the nursing world, rousing it to realise the latent dangers lurking in many of the cases nurses are called upon to attend without a suspicion of the terrible risks they run.

I know that many medical men shirk the unpleasantness of informing patients and their friends lest a scene should result; but is that a justifiable excuse for allowing infection to spread? There certainly can be *no excuse* for allowing Nurses to attend such patients without warning, because of the danger to themselves and their other charges; yet, I believe this is the general rule in many if not most hospitals. It is quite time the Nursing Profession was roused to take steps for its own protection in this direction also, and that men, whether in the profession or not, realise that women may not be exposed to needless danger with impunity.

I came across another subject which I think will interest you. A very estimable woman who had qualified in Scotland as midwife was nursing a complicated case of pneumonia *drawing the full fees of a fully qualified nurse* who had given up at least as many years to her training as she had months. When is Registration coming in? This woman had the audacity to ask me questions as to the care of back and mouth as she had only had maternity cases before (which seemed to have been very straightforward).

Believe me,

Yours truly,

JENTIE PATERSON,  
(Late Sister of Guy's Hospital,  
now retired.)

Windsor Quadrant,  
Kelvinside, Glasgow.

[We thank our correspondent for touching on a question of very great importance to which we have drawn public attention from time to time. We are glad to know that instruction of how to avoid infection from venereal poison is now being

given in several hospitals and infirmaries to the nursing staff. Such teaching should be the rule in all places where persons come in touch with such diseases. We feel sure that the session devoted to "Black Plague" will be one of the most interesting and useful to be held at our Dublin Conference.—ED.]

## THE MORE PUBLICITY THE BETTER.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—May I suggest that one way in which the British Medical Association can help us nurses to protect the public from exploitation and injury is to refuse to employ as a private nurse any woman who has not at least a certificate for a three years' consecutive training in the wards of a good general hospital. Let London members take such action to begin with, and the system of underselling fully-trained nurses by the London Hospital, so courageously tackled by Dr. Chapple, would soon be put down. London Hospital men who are members of the B.M.A. could surely be made to see how unfair such competition is, and would no doubt support our appeal for justice and right dealing.

The London Hospital nurses stand to gain much by such action. They enter into a contract to undersell their profession by short term training without realising it. Many of them realise their ignorance in private work with only two years' ward experience, and have returned to the hospital for a third year's practical work in the wards. Such a third year should be theirs by right.

The London Hospital now stands alone in the Metropolis amongst training-schools as undermining nursing standards. It is as unjust to the nurses as it is to the public, and I feel sure with a little kindly co-operation with private nurses organisations the British Medical Association could soon compel the Committee of Management of the London Hospital to reform its system.

Might I suggest that a list of Nurses' Co-operations be compiled and sent to every member of the B.M.A. in London. Several of the general hospitals which have a Private Nurses' Department permit nurses to work on the co-operative system if they choose, *i.e.*, St. Bartholomew's, University College, Westminster, and the London Homœopathic, perhaps others, and I feel sure that public opinion will support Dr. Chapple that "no hospital should exploit its nurses for its financial advantage." In my opinion this system has always appeared most unjust, and is I believe in many instances the reason hospital governors oppose registration.

I am, yours truly,

RHODA METHERELL,  
(Member R.N.S.)

## THE UN-FREE PRESS.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—“Do you know I am a woman? When I think I must speak.”

But the Press says—you shan't. But the Press

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