

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.

STATE REGISTRATION OF TRAINED NURSES—THE REMEDY.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

MADAM,—The letter from a vice-president of the Red Cross Society referred to in the current issue of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, makes interesting reading to trained nurses; more especially Registrars.

It is well to keep in mind that vice-presidents, V.A.D.s and trained nurses are recruited from various classes of persons, when we are discussing their attitude towards each other. Consequently their social manners will vary. However, it appears that this lady's chief contention is, that the professional attitude of the trained nurse is at fault, inasmuch as she refuses to impart all the technical knowledge she possesses to the aspiring V.A.D. Immediately "Vice-President" proceeds to turn the point of this accusation against herself and the V.A.D.s. She says "The trained nurse must either *improve her ways or go under*. It is up to us members of the Red Cross to see that the tyranny which made a nurse so often an aggravation of illness does not occur again." *This sounds like a threat* to undermine the economic position of the trained nurse and I think she has inadvertently given us the key to the situation!

What are "Trained Nurses"? A body of women workers more or less educated to do a technical job. For three to four years they have no authority, "brief" or otherwise. They are in a subordinate position, very frequently told that they have little or no value until their term of learning is past.

Why, in the name of common sense and most elementary justice, should they be expected to hand over their hardly won laurels to a temporary body of workers—comparatively unskilled—and who might truthfully be described as "clothed in brief authority."

What would the medical profession say or do if a body of Voluntary Aids suddenly demanded their carefully guarded professional status! Had the nursing profession been granted its Bill for legal protection—viz., State Registration—some 15 or 20 years ago, all this unseemly bitterness and quarrelling would have been avoided. The official Auxiliary Nursing Service for the country's use in time of war would have been organised and controlled by the nursing profession itself.

I could say a great many complimentary things about V.A.D.s. who have worked under my supervision in Military Hospitals. Two of them—scorning to usurp a position they were not qualified for—are now in their second year of training at a London hospital.

I could also speak of the "arrogance and incivility" of some—especially the V.A.D. who, thinking "Sister was a very neglectful—not to say dirty—person, removed the splints from a badly-fractured arm to give it 'a good clean up'!"

Doubtless, if we could be quite just and truthful in our judgments the vice of arrogance is pretty evenly distributed among trained nurses, V.A.D.s. and "Vice-Presidents." I am constrained to think that our present accuser, together with her friend the "eminent novelist," would upon reflection agree. No doubt other trained nurses will have something to say on this matter.

Thanking you for your courtesy,

I beg to subscribe myself,

"A WIDE AWAKE SISTER."

County of London War Hospital, Epsom.

ARE POOR LAW NURSES THE SERVANTS OF THE GUARDIANS?

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I enclose you a cutting from a paper, *The Poor Law Journal*, in which you will see that a Mr. R. A. Leach, of the Poor Law Unions Association, seems to consider that Poor Law Nurses, as the "servants" of the Guardians, have no right to representation on their own Governing Body, should a General Nursing Council be set up by Act of Parliament, but that the Guardians should have power over us on the Council, and Mr. Greville Smith suggested blocking the progress of any Bill which does not satisfy this autocratic spirit. Are we Poor Law Nurses the "servants" of the Guardians? I was under the impression we were a State (Local Government Board) service.

Yours truly,

A SUPERINTENDENT NURSE.

[We do not consider Poor Law Nurses are the "servants" of the Guardians, who are the administrators of the ratepayers' money. We consider Poor Law Nurses Local Government Board *officials*, as they have a right of appeal to the Local Government Board—servants of the State, in fact. The anti-registration movement has all along been inspired by the objection of those who employ nurses (who consider them their "servants") to a just degree of self-government for trained nurses. Any system of registration which places members of a skilled profession like nursing under lay control, is much more dangerous to their personal liberty than no system of registration at all. That is our reason for criticising the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the College of Nursing, Limited, because it is a lay company, and as they now stand many of the provisions are calculated to place "registered nurses" in a dangerously subordinate position. Let us hope they will be amended at an early date.—ED.]

The Editor has received so many letters on the subject of the College of Nursing and the "Supply of Nurses Committee," that it is impossible to insert those which exceed three or four inches.

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