

## 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.*

## SHOULD V.A.D. PROBATION COUNT AS TRAINING.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—If space permits, please insert my reply to the military matron who signs herself "Fully Trained Nurse." We both feel we are lovers of fair play, but seem to regard it from different standpoints. As Ward Sister in military hospitals since 1914, in France, the East, hospital ship and home stations, I may claim to be in even closer touch with V.A.D.s than a matron. I also organised many of these workers in the stormy pre-war "Ulster Days," and know what sort of "scratch" training is necessary for them to obtain their first aid certificates. That they have in very many cases done splendid work is not denied, but that they receive any *systematic training* to entitle them to a shortened general training is absurd. Why deify this particular body of war workers? Probationers in city hospitals undergoing training do so often amid heat and trying circumstances, unsurrounded by glamour and at a much smaller annual salary than £20. Personally, I had received my certificate before I achieved this magnificent sum! Till we arrange a standard of reciprocal training, nurses who have already done their fever and children's work, and who desire their general certificate, undergo the full course before they receive it. Yet, it is suggested that V.A.D.s should be allowed to deduct the time they have nursed in the army from their general training. Fever nurses have done much more than "help with enterics," and what V.A.D.—however "much her intelligence has helped her to absorb"—can hold a match to candidates from Pendlebury, Evelina, and Shadwell Hospitals?

The V.A.D. is herself to blame if she is regarded as a temporary help. When the first cry went up, "Let the V.A.D.s help," and the W.O. accepted them, their patriotism shied at a twelve months' agreement, and many of them leave, when they are becoming most useful (for fresh fields to conquer).

My last letter was not a bow at a venture. I had heard of a base hospital in France where lectures of a kind were started for V.A.D.s and orderlies. I had made careful enquiries from Sisters who had worked in Alexandria during 1915-1916, and they smiled at the idea of systematic courses of lectures as we know them at home, given by the medical, surgical and nursing staff during the probationers' systematic ward training. It is war time, and they are war helpers, and I have never worked in a hospital where any Sister had time to undertake a course of lectures.

We accept their help, good, bad and indifferent, and overlook faults, deficiencies, and breaches of etiquette, which in a training school would be corrected and go towards the probationer's training.

At such a time as this we must close our ranks, strengthen our position, and try to elevate, not lower, the standard of training—which such a concession would involve.

I am, yours truly,

J. B. N. PATERSON.

## THE OFFENDING CLAUSE.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I consulted two Territorial Matrons and they both advised me to sign the Agreement with the War Office, containing the "Offending Clause." I was greatly in need of a rise of salary, now I realise how demoralising it is—something like selling one's birthright for a mess of pottage. Both Matrons-in-Chief must have approved of and agreed to it, or surely it would not have been thrust on us.

Yours truly,

A POVERTY-STRICKEN PERSON.

[We learn this nurse has an invalid mother who must have help.—ED.]

## "THE PRESS GANG."

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—The savage pen wielded by Sir Henry Burdett in his *Nursing Mirror* and *Hospital* is now jabbing at every person who ventures to criticise his College of Nursing.

It is no secret that he helped to evolve its autocratic constitution twelve years ago under another name, and he has recently had the bad taste to attack the professional status of the greatly respected organiser of the N.U.T.N.

How about the College Council who have been nominated to evolve our professional salvation?

Is it not true that two of the Matron members on its proposed Council failed to get their certificates at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and another only holds a certificate for *one* year's training at Middlesex Hospital? It is an insult to Nurses holding certificates for three years' training that those of the same school who failed should arrogate to themselves the responsibility of defining our educational curriculum and of making Rules and Regulations for our profession, and I decline to be "registered" or "controlled" by any such nominated Council.

Again, how about Sir Henry Burdett's *Nursing Mirror* "Sergeants"? The "Press Gang" is a more appropriate title for them.

A DISGUSTED MEMBER OF THE  
BARTS LEAGUE.

## EAST END MOTHERS' HOME.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—The Report of the lovely work being done at the East End Mothers' Home cannot fail to touch the heart of those who can help

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