

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 V.A.D. AND PRIVATE NURSING.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—In a recent journal you invited the opinion of trained nurses, *re* whether a V.A.D. should nurse or assist in nursing a member of her own family—expressing the editorial opinion that work or no work every daughter had a right to nurse her own mother. I was engaged in private nursing for several years, my work frequently being with wealthy people. The thing that impressed me more than anything was the irresponsible feeling of the female members of the family towards the one that was ill. Whether it was selfishness or ignorance I do not know. They appeared to welcome the trained nurse, so that they could escape from the sickroom and be free to follow their usual occupations. Often I have found no one either capable or willing to relieve me while I took my meals or a walk; and, as for sharing the night duty, well I should have been looked upon as a lunatic if I had hinted at anything so monstrous.

Many a time I should have welcomed a V.A.D. daughter who knew sufficient to carry out my instructions and also had sense enough to call me when she required help. I have no hesitation in giving it as my opinion that members of the family have not only a right, but it is their duty to help the trained nurse, not merely to save expense but to be a comfort to the invalid. Why hand over those dear to you to a stranger? Put yourself in her place. I have known V.A.D.s of all sorts, girls who have been taught to work in their homes are of great use. They work cheerfully and do anything they are asked; they have filled the gap caused by women taking up special war work, thus leaving the trained nurse's time for the patients. They are anxious to learn and appreciate any instruction given. Of course, they do not understand hospital discipline and etiquette; we have to ignore that. There are others whose intentions are equally good, but having spent their lives in offices, they are ignorant of how to do anything in a house. The experience these girls get in hospitals will be of untold value to them when they have homes of their own. When I see their want of practical common sense, I ask myself, "Is this the cause of so many unhappy homes?" Many of them have thanked me for teaching them cooking and housework. Then there is another type, more often they are called Commandant, who usurps the position of the trained nurse. I can't waste time over their ignorance and self-satisfaction; they don't realize I had gone through my hospital career while they were in the nursery—or unknown. I think one

good result of this terrible war will be that the girls of our country have learnt to be useful and to appreciate the "joy of work."

I am no advocate for owners of nursing homes engaging V.A.D.s to take the place of nurses. Patients pay for skilled nursing, and it is a fraud if they do not get it. Neither should they pose as trained nurses and receive the ordinary fee for nursing. State Registration will put that matter right. [Only if three years' training is recognised.—ED.] Encourage every woman to do all she can for those dear to her in sickness and in health. Their duty to their country will be severely tried when the war is over. *Their* duty will be to help and cheer the poor broken men; the excitement will be over, they will require infinite devotion and patience to "carry on" through many weary years. Money will be scarce, also many things which have been thought necessities heretofore in their homes. This will be their work, not the trained nurse's.

Yours faithfully,

JULIA HURLSTON.

Palé Auxiliary Military Hospital,
North Wales.

PUBLICITY BY POSTER PARADE.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I am lost in admiration at the splendid courage of the nurses who paraded London with sandwich boards in protest against "The Nation's Fund for Nurses" and the methods employed to prevent controversy. The printing and boards would cost money, so also the leaflets distributed in front of the Queen's Hall by Miss Hawkins and others. Those who are unable to help in the actual work must not forget to send the means to make the wheels go round.

To seize the opportunity, I fear those working at headquarters are often out of pocket. This may not be realised by those in sympathy with the cause. I have therefore pleasure in enclosing you a cheque for £5, which please give to the promoters of the scheme.

I am, yours truly,

ONE WHO WISHES TO PAY HER OWN
WAY TO REGISTRATION.

[This generous gift will more than cover the expense incurred, and will greatly encourage those members of the Nurses' Protection Committee, who are determined to gain publicity for our opinions in spite of a subsidised Press.—ED.]

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION.

QUESTIONS.

December 29th.—Describe the nursing of a case of ophthalmia neonatorum.

January 5th.—Mention some diseases of the intestines and their treatment and nursing.

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