

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.

SELF-GOVERNMENT FOR NURSES AN IMPERIAL QUESTION.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I am an Australian Nurse, and may I through your columns express my thanks to the American and Dutch Nurses for their sisterly interest in the struggle in which pioneer State Registrationists are engaged in England; their messages sent through THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING prove their deep sense of professional responsibility.

On the other hand, I deeply regret to note the non-committal advice given to us Australian Nurses through our own *Australasian Nurses' Journal* (which by the way is not edited by a trained nurse) in reply to Miss Edwards' letter placing the underlying principles for which the Central Committee for State Registration of Nurses has all along contended, before the nursing world at the antipodes, and asking for an expression of opinion on our part.

The *Australasian Nurses' Journal* states that "British nurses and their leaders are not unanimous either for or against the (College) scheme, and the result is that the nursing profession of Great Britain is divided into two hostile camps, each fighting enthusiastically and vigorously for its own views. It is not for us to give an opinion on either side."

This is a very short-sighted and misleading statement—what the pioneer registrationists are fighting for is not "their own views," but for the government of the nursing profession by the profession, the very identical principle for which we founded and have maintained our Australasian Trained Nurses Association; and the College of Nursing is a company of laymen who claim that the laity have a right to nominate a Council controlled by themselves, to define standards for registration, to govern trained nurses in Great Britain, and incidentally to define the relations of Australasian nurses with those in Great Britain—as put forward in their Bill.

I claim we Australian nurses have therefore a direct interest in this struggle between practising nurses and the Nursing Schools. We have stood out against the control of the lay governors of hospitals in Australia; why, therefore, are we prohibited from expressing an opinion of disapproval on this all-important professional question in Britain? I for one object to the assumption that the professional self-government of the Nursing Profession is not an Imperial question—and no Australian nurse who has worked through this war as I have done, side by side with

the Imperial Sisters, will deny that we have not only a right, but it is our duty, to stand side by side with the pioneers for professional status in Britain, as we expect them to respect our standards at home, when the question of reciprocity—as provided in both Bills—arises.

Yours sincerely,
AN AUSTRALIAN ARMY SISTER.

THE BEST MEANS FOR INCREASING THE SUPPLY OF PRACTISING MIDWIVES.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Before midwifery appeals to the type of woman it is important that it should attract, there must be (1) remuneration having a more adequate relation to the responsibility borne, (2) less patronage by lay people, (3) inspection of midwives by midwives, and neither by medical women—whose outlook is usually unsympathetic where nurses and midwives are concerned—nor by Health Visitors, who frequently know considerably less than those whom they inspect.

As for a higher qualification for midwives, it is very desirable that such a qualification should be obtainable by certified midwives by examination after two years of practice, and it should be a *sine qua non* for recognition as a teacher.

I agree with your correspondent that training as a nurse should precede that in the special branch of midwifery; but full training, not a year only, in which the pupil would only obtain that little knowledge which is a dangerous thing. But, as Parliament in its wisdom, or unwisdom, has organised midwives under an Act which takes no cognisance of nursing, I do not see how the Board set up to carry out the Act can do so. Sooner or later the Nurses and Midwives Acts will probably be amalgamated. Meanwhile, one can readily recall a number of midwives well able to bear much more responsibility than the Midwives Act now places upon them. Why not give it them on proof of their capacity?

Yours faithfully,

A WARM BELIEVER IN THE
VALUE OF MIDWIVES.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

QUESTIONS.

July 28th.—(a) What symptoms may be found in an infant who is suffering from congenital syphilis? (b) What symptoms may develop in a new-born infant if the mother is suffering from gonorrhoea?

August 4th.—What instruction would you give to expectant mothers on the subject of breast feeding of their infants, and how would you help them to prepare for this duty?

August 11th.—How would you nurse a patient addicted (1) to the alcohol habit, (2) to the morphia habit? What are the principal points to observe?

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