

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 pleased to note that my letter under the above heading has aroused some interest amongst overseas nurses, and beg to be permitted to reply to "Another Australian Army Sister."

First, I take very strong exception to the statement made by my colleague that "the medical profession has made the best of the Nursing Profession what they are." The members of that honoured faculty have done no such thing. The best of the Nursing Profession are "best" because of their own unselfishness, hard work, and intelligence, because of their high ideals of what nursing ought to be, and because of their altruistic attitude towards humanity, and also because the great Florence Nightingale, in spite of the medical profession, widespread ignorance, and reactionary politicians, was endowed with genius and sufficient social influence to lay down the fundamental principles of scientific nursing, and to have them adopted as the basis of our professional education. Let us "render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's."

My compatriot writes: "It is hard in Australia to understand the conditions prevailing in the United Kingdom, and our journal (*A.T.N.A.*) was absolutely correct in its non-committal attitude." It is just there that we differ. In my opinion it is the duty of the Editor or editorial committee to "understand the conditions in the United Kingdom," the centre and pivot of our Empire, on all social questions which may and do affect its component parts overseas. And it is also the duty of those who control our journal to keep us well instructed concerning nursing politics, and not to adopt an invertebrate non-committal policy, either through ignorance or cowardice. This nursing controversy in the United Kingdom is a struggle (soon to become acute in industrial sections) between progress and reaction, freedom of conscience and cramping of intelligence, the privileged class and their beasts of burden, the old, old struggle between the employer and the worker; it is the demand for self-expression and self-government, and because our predecessors have won freedom for us throughout the great Commonwealth, which is our beloved country, what is the use of it if we have not the energy to help others to enjoy it also? Not only in this great war, but in social reform throughout the Empire, it is the duty of Australia "to be there."

My compatriot continues: "We love peace professionally. War to the knife against King Death, but no one else."

Well, I again beg to differ from her. Death, the inevitable, is not the greatest enemy of mankind, but tyranny and injustice, and greed and cowardice and sloth, these are the hydra-headed soul-destroyers, against which "war to the knife" was never more necessary, and they need tackling in the Nursing World as elsewhere.

I thank "A New Zealand Army Sister" for her support of my contention that self-government for the Nursing Profession is an Imperial question.

Yours sincerely,

AN AUSTRALIAN ARMY SISTER.

A COURT OF INQUIRY FOR NURSES.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I saw a suggestion in the *B.J.N.* some time ago that military nurses, like soldiers, should have the right to a court of enquiry before being summarily discharged from the Regular or Territorial Services by the Head of the Army Medical Department. As nurses have no military rank, I do not know how this could be arranged. Moreover, Lord Beresford says, in the *Times*, that even an officer has no right to a court martial. On questions affecting his honour, he can request a court martial, and that request is generally acceded to. Sometimes a court of inquiry is convened, but evidence before such a court is not taken on oath. Such courts are not judicial and have no power of punishment.

The normal advice given to a nurse, if disapproved of, is, that "she had better resign quietly"; and as nurses are proverbially timorous, they usually get shuffled out of the Services without any sufficient investigation.

Yours truly,

ONE WHO HAS SUFFERED.

NURSES' PETITION TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

All certificated nurses in favour of direct representation on the Provisional Nursing Council set up in a Nurses' Registration Act to make the rules and regulations to which registered nurses have to conform, should sign the Petition to the Prime Minister promoted by the Society for the State Registration of Trained Nurses. Forms free from the Petition Secretary, 431, Oxford Street, London, W. 1.

OUR PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

QUESTIONS.

August 11th.—What would you do in a case of (a) severe hæmoptysis; (b) angina pectoris; (c) fainting, respectively.

August 18th.—What are the chief causes of rickets? What are its prominent symptoms, and how can a district nurse aid in its prevention?

August 25th.—How does puerperal septicæmia arise? Describe the course and management of the disease.

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