

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 PRIVATE NURSES' SALARIES BE RAISED?

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I consider private nurses' fees should not be raised to more than two guineas for an ordinary case. With nursing institutions the nurses are nearly always employed and usually only receive half the fees to what they bring in, so the profit must be enormous, when the small staff is worked over and over again, and this war will make people do without nurses and so injure the private nurses on their own account, who do go, like the doctors, according to people's circumstances—I mean large mansions, hotels, or small villas. One can reduce one's fee for poorer people, and so be kept many more weeks employed through doing that, and so give comfort to many invalids who could not employ a nurse for so long if the fees are so enormous. It will do great harm to the profession if the nursing institutions do raise their fees like that. Myself and sister have been doing private nursing for quite ten years on our own account now, and we do reduce if it is really necessary and if the case is rather long and not a very busy time of the year; it is far more profitable to take a smaller fee than be unemployed. It would pay the institutions the same then, better than have to house and feed a lot of nurses when a chronic invalid would, for a reduced fee, employ a nurse. After the war, when all these V.A.D. nurses are released, it will be very difficult to get much private work if nurses' fees are so enormous.

F. SHEPPARD, *Certificated Nurse.*

Tunbridge Wells.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I do not think it would be wise to raise the fees for private nurses. The patient is paying more already in food and the trouble to get the food is very great. Laundry also costs more, in many cases nearly double. A patient told me she was paying 3d. each for sheets which used to be 3d. per pair; towels and pillow cases, window curtains and cloths for dressing tables are nearly all double the old price. It is hard on the nurses, it is true, for uniform, shoes and underclothing all cost more and is not satisfactory even then; but we are better off than many of our soldiers, who gave up several hundreds per year, for a few pounds, much hardship, great suffering, possible deformity and very probably sudden death.

Yours truly,

A PRIVATE NURSE.

431, Oxford Street, W.

AN INDEPENDENT GOVERNING BODY IMPERATIVE.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—Now that a very persistent policy of coercion is being promoted in the majority of training-schools, in hospitals and infirmaries, and nurses are practically compelled to join the College, whether they wish to do so or not, may I suggest that if they cannot afford the increased price of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING, the only nurses' paper that does not ram the College down our throats every week, that they should club together and pay for it on the co-operative system. Thus if one of the staff collects 1s. each from eleven nurses, they can have it sent from the office for a year. We are not allowed by many Matrons to *hear* both sides of this question, but there is no reason why we should not *read* both points of view. In this hospital we are now handed application forms for membership of the College, with our certificates, *and told to fill them in!* We are treated just like sheep (which most of us are), as the rules we agree to conform to are not printed on the agreement we have to sign we do not realise the pit-falls. Unless we are members of the College, *it has been conveyed to us that we are not eligible for promotion*, and as the majority of us have not a penny we do not earn, few have the spirit to stand out against this economic pressure. The secretary here is quite as determined to herd us into the College compound as the Matron. All the registration certificates are signed by Sir Arthur Stanley—an entirely lay guarantee of our professional prowess! No hospital certificate would be of value unless signed by the Matron.

Yours truly,

ONE OF THE HERD.

[Poverty is a hard, and sometimes an unscrupulous, task mistress, but even that is no excuse for submitting to coercion if a nurse realises it. But we have now ample proof of the undue influence being used by hospital and infirmary authorities over their young nurses to compel them to join the College, whether they wish to do so or not, and the marvel is, with all this coercion that it has taken two years to influence 7,000 more or less dependent nurses to join. Anyway, when the Nurses' Registration Bill is before Parliament, this danger to the personal and professional liberty of working women will be determinedly driven home. We are in no mood for Kaiserism, and those nurses outside the jurisdiction of the nursing schools do not mean to submit to their unbridled control. We must have an *independent* governing body.—ED.]

OUR PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

QUESTIONS.

February 16th.—What are some grave complications to be watched for after an extensive burn?

February 23rd.—Define thrombosis and the details of nursing required.

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