

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.

A VOICE FROM AFAR.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR EDITOR,—To-day on a small island, in Lake Nyasa, I am reading the January papers, our latest news! I feel compelled to congratulate THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING and the League of St. Bartholomew's Hospital Nurses on the fact that at last we are to have State Registration of Nurses. Whenever I think of this, one personality fills my mind, that of Isla Stewart—R.I.P. How she would rejoice over this, for which she worked so hard in her leisure hours, which were very few. I can hear her voice now telling her nurses.

1. To hear both sides of the question.
2. To think the matter over carefully, and to decide for themselves whether they were for or against State Registration; and if in favour to do all in their power to further the cause.

I never met anyone who heard Miss Stewart's arguments, who was on the wrong side.

And I am proud to sign myself as

ONE OF HER SISTERS.

Likoma, Nyasaland,
April 15th, 1920.

NURSING CONTINUOUS WORK.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

MADAM,—With reference to the assertion of Sir Lambert Ormsby as reported in the *Irish Times* of June 1st, to the effect that a nurse while on duty in her ward or in attendance on private patients "might be half her time on duty reading a book, writing a letter, or doing needlework," so long as she were within call of her patients; we venture to state that very few matrons would be satisfied to find a nurse reading a novel in her ward, unless perhaps, she were on night duty, when such a relaxation might sometimes be considered permissible.

Indeed, few nurses would dare even to sit down in the ward, unless it were to repair or make articles of ward equipment, or write a report. Moreover, any time during which a nurse is bound to be on duty, to attend a call or answer a bell, cannot be considered as rest time; and the very fact that she may be called upon to fill every minute, if necessary, with arduous work involving considerable mental strain as well as physical exertion, precludes the possibility of classing a nurse's hours of duty as any but "continuous work."

Emphatically we maintain that it is continuous work, and as continuous work it must be gauged and paid and recognised. Never have the advocates of an eight hour day for nurses placed them "on a par with the ordinary artisan or builder's labourer," because nurses, in their calling, combine the responsibilities of the manager with the fatigues of the labourer. The nurse, moreover,

though nominally on "time work," is, in reality, on "piece work," for her "jobs" must be accomplished, at whatever cost to herself. When work is heavy she must work overtime, or at an increased speed, for nothing can be neglected, and for what she cannot find time she must "make time." We feel confident that, in spite of the long silence in which members of the nursing profession have buried their convictions, every nurse can corroborate our view of this question from her own experience.

Yours faithfully,

M. MORTISHED, *Secretary.*

Irish Nurses' Union, Dublin.

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

Voluntary Worker: "At a Red Cross meeting at Brighton we were recently told that V.A.D.s must be trained to do useful work for the civil population. They could do work in connection with the Ministry of Pensions, and now the V.A.D. charter had been enlarged they could work among the civil population in infant welfare centres, in dispensaries, in school clinics and invalid kitchens. Health visiting, too, would do much towards the prevention of disease."

Sir Arthur Stanley, Chairman of the Joint Committee of the Red Cross Society, said that it was impossible to say definitely in what form the energies of V.A.D.'s would be most required now the war was over. They were only certain that they would be wanted. I for one left the meeting fully convinced that the time is past for voluntary work; it must take the bread out of somebody's mouth."

Miss Sarah Brown, London: "Every nurse will sympathise with the desire for purity and self-control advocated by Miss Marie V. Winters, but are we sure that the self-control maintained by fear of venereal disease is the result of "the highest ideals"? I do not think so. The man who has in his pocket the packet of prevention—and does not use it—is the stronger man. If immediate self-disinfection was alone for the benefit of those who are tempted and fall, one might hesitate to make it easy, but it is the appalling result and horrible injury to the innocent which results from communicating venereal disease that makes me an advocate (after much experience in treating these cases) of the necessity for immediate and effectual disinfection. To communicate venereal poison to a human being is, in my opinion, a crime; it must be treated as such and punished—or frail humanity be permitted to make itself immune."

OUR PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

June 19th.—What do you know of hay fever, its causes and treatment?

June 26th.—Name all the diseases you know which may be disseminated by insect carriers, mentioning in each case the insect which is responsible, and stating how the infection is introduced into the human body.

July 3rd.—What are the causes of swelling of the legs (1) during pregnancy, (2) after labour? How would you deal with such cases?

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