

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.

WHY NURSING ABROAD IS POPULAR.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—One hears rumours that certain lady superintendents bemoan the fact that their Associations are now mostly composed of middle-aged and elderly nurses; that the younger ones no longer care to stay in England.

I have received a letter from a lady who has taken a post abroad (I hear quite a number of the younger nurses are doing this). As a variation from the different tales of woe one hears daily from the nurses at home, it is very refreshing to receive a letter such as the one from which I give you the following extract:—

"I have quite settled down here and am very happy indeed, but get an occasional twinge of home sickness. This hospital can accommodate fifty patients, and there are wards for Europeans and natives. I am in charge of a native ward, and we have several big operations weekly. Of course, we only do the dressings; there are native nurses who do all the rough work. We are invited out to anything that goes on, and entertain a good deal at the hospital also. I am taking up riding and golf, and we have got a fine tennis court in the hospital grounds and you can invite anybody you like. There is also a hospital 'At Home' on the first Sunday of every month, so you see we have plenty of relaxation."

Why should it not be possible in England to arrange for fully trained nurses to do their professional duties, and leave the rougher work for ward orderlies or a superior class of ward maids? We would then perhaps hear that it was possible for nurses at home to have, not quite perhaps such as good a time as my correspondent is having, but something approaching more nearly the existence of an ordinary human being!

Yours faithfully,

MAUDE MACCALLUM,

Hon. Secretary Professional Union of Trained Nurses.

(We are in favour of trained nurses being relieved of unnecessary domestic work, so as to have time and energy to nurse the sick, but where in the United Kingdom is this class of ward orderlies and superior ward maids to be recruited to do the ward drudgery? We learn that the domestic service in hospitals is only maintained with the utmost difficulty, and at great expense. We know one Matron who has instituted the ward orderly system; if she would give her experience it would be valuable. Social conditions for nurses abroad are much more "human" than at home.—ED.)

A RIGHT TO GIVE ORDERS.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I am training in a large London hospital where patients are now being asked to pay a little towards their support, and I already notice a distinct difference of manner towards the nursing staff than when, as in the past, we were part of a "charity." Especially do the patients' friends now appear to think they have a right to give orders. In the old days it was "will you kindly" do this, that, or the other; sometimes now it is, "Here, nurse, do this or the other." My experience of the very poor has always been that they are most considerate and grateful; but the "shoppy" class just above them—who are now coming here for £5 worth of treatment for a £1, and who are earning "good money" and spending it selfishly—look upon us as their servants and not as their nurses. If others have noticed this change of tone and spirit in the wards of hospitals where contributions are received, it will certainly militate against educated girls entering hospitals for training, and we want no further disadvantages, added to long hours, noise, and inferior food, to dishearten women with a nurse's vocation from entering the training-schools. The experience of others on this point would be useful.

Yours truly,

STAFF NURSE (GENERAL HOSPITAL.)

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

Bart.'s League Sister.—"I suppose you know we are all getting very impatient to see our Registration Act in force and our names on a State Register?" [We truly sympathise and see no reason why Registration should not be in force at an early date. In making the Rules it is very important to do the work well, and where so many interests are involved, mistakes are more easily made than rectified.—ED.]

Private Nurse.—"We read much about the shortage of nurses, but my experience is that at present in London there is a great shortage of private cases. It always is so more or less in September and October, but persons with moderate incomes think twice before engaging a trained nurse, who now costs £5 a week."

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION

QUESTIONS.

October 9th.—State what you know about the Care of the New-Born Babe.

October 16th.—What is Surface Nursing? How would you care for the skin, hair, mouth, and nails of a helpless patient?

October 23rd.—How would you prepare the following for the use of the surgeon at operation? :

- (a) Ureteric catheters.
- (b) Silk-worm gut.
- (c) Chromatised gut.
- (d) Gauze abdominal packs.
- (e) Scissors.

October 30th.—What are the dangers of syphilis in the pregnant woman, and what is a nurse's duty in such cases?

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