

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.

MORE LEISURE FOR PRIVATE NURSES.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

MADAM,—A good deal has already been written in these columns against the forty-eight hours Bill for "Private Nurses." What the nurses have failed to grasp is the iniquity of perpetuating a service which entails attendance on a patient in an overworked semi-conscious condition, either because the nurse is unwilling to leave her patient to relatives, or fear that if she does so they will depreciate her value and dispense with skilled services. The public requires educating on this point. Many to whom I have spoken have been astonished when I pointed out the danger to their relatives engendered by keeping a nurse on duty overtime; equally so the danger of a nurse coming direct from a heavy case to a critical one without any period of rest. If the nurse and relatives are willing to risk the "overworked condition" during the acute stage, the nurse should get extra off duty during the convalescent period, or a free period at the end at her employer's expense, thus spreading the forty-eight hours over a period of three or four weeks. The public must be made to realise that, while it is customary for the relatives to have a change and rest after sickness in the home, the over-worked nurse may be sent direct to another case. Looked at in this light, the forty-eight hours' Bill will not only safeguard the nurse's health, but the nation's life.

I am, &c.,

Greenwich.

J. B. N. PATERSON.

NO COERCION.

To the Editor of THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.

DEAR MADAM,—I am glad you have expressed yourself as strongly opposed to coercion with regard to nurses being forced to join any society whatever. We do not want to replace one tyranny by another.

Every nurse ought to be absolutely free to join any Union or Society she thinks would meet her requirements. Neither a Trade Union nor a College of Nursing, Limited, ought to be imposed upon her, whether she wishes it or no.

This Union, at any rate, does not wish to countenance such a proceeding—we are out for freedom for all. Neither do we intend to interfere with any existing Nurses Society, either by trying to prevent Members from joining, or by publicly or privately disparaging it.

Our policy is constructive, not destructive; and our object is to unite in one large Union members of every shade of Nursing opinion.

Yours faithfully,
MAUDE MACCALLUM.
(Hon. Secretary).

The Professional Union of Trained Nurses,
17, Evelyn House, 62, Oxford Street, W.1.

KERNELS FROM CORRESPONDENCE.

THE TIME WILL COME.

Sheffield Nurse.—"I enclose you a cutting from a local paper, from which you will gather that, presumably, the Rev. S. T. G. Smith, the Chaplain to the Sheffield Royal Infirmary, has never heard of either the Nurses' Registration Act, or the General Nursing Council, the Statutory Council it sets up, and which is empowered by Parliament to organize the nursing profession and not only protect its interests, but the interests of the public. In opening the bazaar for a Residential Club for Nurses, he is reported to have said: 'No other profession had advanced as had the nursing profession, and he considered it only right that trained, fully-qualified nurses should have the protection afforded them by the College of Nursing. This institution not only acted as a safeguard to nurses, but also to patients, who might otherwise find themselves in the hands of someone quite unqualified.' What right has this reverend gentleman to confuse the nurses' minds by attributing the powers of the General Nursing Council to the College of Nursing, Ltd., which does not exist as a College at all? It is high time this attempted 'College' rivalry with our legal Governing Body was exposed. It appears to me the Matrons encourage this mystification."

[No doubt when the Rules for State Registration are in force the General Nursing Council will take means to instruct the nursing profession and the public as to its legal powers and responsibilities, and the privileges bestowed upon the profession by the Acts of Parliament.—ED.]

"IDLE SWINE."

Returned from Rhineland.—"When in Germany I kept my ears as well as eyes open. The 'new hearts' we hear about in political circles at home, are few and far between. The truth is Germany is a ready worming in the dark for its revenge—especially is their hatred of the British not to be hidden. 'We give ourselves five years—or at the most eight—to smash up your Empire.' I have heard that threat more than once. How futile all this attitude of humanitarianism and pacificism is! The average Hun puts it down to moral weakness and physical apathy. 'Idle swine!' one of them described us. They don't hide their contempt."

OUR PRIZE COMPETITION
QUESTIONS.

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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